READ "THE STOLEN MAIDENS" IN THIS NUMBER OF THE LEDGER SURE
NEXT WEEK "THE RANCELAND DAISY," A GREAT STORY OF RANCH LIFE

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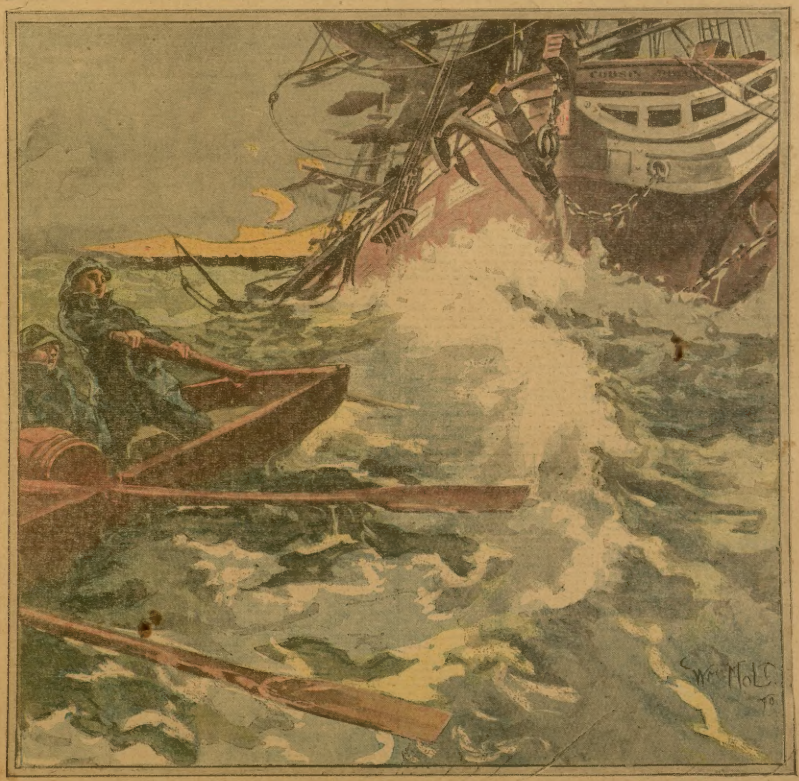

IN STRANGE SEAS;

Or, THE FLYING DUTCHMAN'S DAUGHTER

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER I.

IT WAS in the forecastle of the full-rigged ship Saucy Jane. The starboard watch was below, and I was sitting on my chest hard by the elbow of old Jack Golden. It was my first voyage before the mast, and probably Jack's twentieth. I was an exceedingly green hand, while he had signed the articles for many years as the ablest of able seamen. My unfamiliarity with the sea led me to look upon full-fledged mariners as greater men than any land warrior or crafty statesman, and Jack was the subject of my especial admiration. I was only sixteen, and small and slight, as well as rather timid and wholly affectionate, and I was able to worship Jack without meeting quite so much banter as the average lad must find at sea if he pores as anything but a hard-headed tar.

It all came about because I then heard a name I had never heard before, and asked for information.

"What!" exclaimed Jack, his red beard twisting as he smiled indulgently at my ignorance. "You don't know who the Flying Dutchman is?"

"No, I said faintly, impressed by the folk'sle smile.

"My fault, then; I should have teached ye that when showin' ye how to do things aboard. The Flying Dutchman is as real as Father Neptune, but he's a lad with a cargo of ill luck that would sink the Saucy Jane to her gunnels."

"Is it a ship, or brig, or sloop——"

Here the forecastle smile became a general laugh, and it was aimed at me in derision, but Jack cut the hands short.

"Avast, there!" he growled. "You all had to hear o' the Flying Dutchman the first time, and 'll bet my kit against a small rope feazin' you bit off a mouthful fit for a shark. Belay, an' don't shove your ignorance"

They obeyed. Jack, usually very good-humored, was the strongest man before the mast, and cunning with his fists, and when he gave an order his mates rarely ventured to anger him. Now, plainly glad of a chance to free his mind, he stowed a fat lump of navy in his mouth and began to chew with vigor as he began his story.

"The Flying Dutchman!" he repeated. "Worst chap for ill luck that ever trod a quarter deck or pulled at a halyard. What do you think, Nat, of a v'yge that has lasted a hundred years and ain't ended yet?"

The old sailor looked at me, but, more flattered than ever, I felt speechless and only shook my head, so he went on easily.

"I'was a Dutch ship, Nat, an' her trouble began off the Cape of Good Hope while she was homeward bound from Batavia—"

"I've heard it was an outward v'yge, an' the trouble off Cape Horn," said another tar.

"Accounts differ, though nine men in ten put it the way I first gave it, Nat; master, though, I'll foller t'other account if ye wish. Well, then, she sailed from Amsterdam for the Indies with a crew and officers under the command of Captain Vanderdecken as master. Accounts differ as to her name, an' I fancy nobody exactly knows—"

"I've been told she was the Snyder Zee," interrupted a man at the farther end of the line of starboarders.

I cast a glance his way. He was Jerry Whitebone, a tall, slender, odd-looking person with flaxen hair, a beard trimmed to a point, and eyes of peculiar gray.

"Any name you say," quoth Jack, good-humoredly. "Hawin', anyhow, I'll take my ground from Cape o' Good Hope to the Horn, minus things can be arranged easily. Still, since you're authority, maybe you can say what her cargo was?"

"Some sort chiefly merchant goods, made and unmade, being things for men and women to wear," answered Jerry, with a half-reluctant.

"Huh!" muffled Jack. "Reckon the Pacific islanders didn't hanker much for clothes in them days. A smile an' simple truth made a good end o' trade for their fellers. Well, then, who is to tell the yarn, anyhow?"

"Why, myself, all hands!" said Jerry, and Jack resumed:

"What I'm gettin' at, if I'm allowed a chance, is what come o' that v'yge. Nat, first of you ever rounded Cape Horn you will find a mighty uckish job. You will strike bitter weather, with a mixture of hyp, sheet an' hail, an' the wind'll blow the best all other winds. When it blows off Cape Horn, an' it always blows there, it's fury let loose. Worse yet, it blows freaky. You docent, divin' squall one day, an' lulls in' bothersome winds. Get somewhere an' think you're about to round the Horn an' the next shift and blow you somewhere else. That's Cape Horn, an' roundin' the Cape is the worst bugaboo about the mast get into.

"I was in the brigatine Polly Nell, a smart craft with a smart crew, when we made the run 'an' it took us three weeks to go round in sixteen. All we gained we lost every day.

"Round the Horn," added Tom feelingly, "is like rivin' to be a hundred years old—you'll do it if you don't die too soon."

"Well, well, about Vanderdecken!" said Jack, a little impatient. "I was in Amsterdam as I've said, capable skipper in a good ship an' with plenty o' Dutch grit on board, and finally he fetched sight o' The Magellan Clouds an' the Southern Cross were above the horizon an' when he had passed the Falklands he had the lower g'ins of Patagonia hard down on the starboard hand stickin' out like a broken off nose o' the land. Look it up sometime, Nat, in geography. Nothin' like knowin' just how things look when you get interested in a place."

"Blast the Horn!" put in Tom, his voice subdued.

"Eh?" cried Jack. "Blast it, say you? Vanderdecken tried that same, and it didn't cause on't? You shall hear, Nat. That Dutch ship struck them tantalizin' winds, an' was driven an' driven back an' forward, back, ways an' t'otherways, an' she got her troubles bad. Day after day, week after week, they tried to call that short distance, an' make it they couldn't. Squalls beat them all the while an' they gained only to lose right after, an' they grew hero an' hoo until all hands was desperate. Then Vanderdecken, bein' a naturally passionate man, did a rash thing."

Here Tim Murphy and Felix Gomez, being drawn near, crowded themselves and shivered. I had been intent on what Jack was saying, but their nearness disturbed my attention. My gaze chanced to pass them and I saw Jerry Whitebone, sitting on his chest with his head between his hands as he bore on his knees and his chin on his hands, staring at Jack in a strangely intent manner. It was only a passing idea then, but I thought of it afterward when he was almost gloried, and his lips were parted in eagerness.

"Vanderdecken did a rash thing," Jack went on soberly. "Angry all though, he swore he'd round the Horn in spite of man and God!"

"Oh!" the word was insane!" cried Felix. "He dared to put his will against that of the Almighty!"

"There you have it," Jack agreed. "I'm a rough sailor, but I know all men are weak, and it becomes them to defy the Almighty. Vanderdecken tried it, an' he found out his mistake. A curse was laid upon him an' his ship, then an' there, and he didn't round the Horn. No, sirree, then, an' not since. A hundred year, more or less, Vanderdecken has been tryin'—always tryin' to get round the Horn, but the curse him has been too much for his weak human powers. Yes, for a hundred year, more or less, an' his ship an' crew has been fightin' them baffling winds, fightin' cold, snow, rain an' squalls, an—that's all there is to it."

"Did you ever see Vanderdecken and his ship?" asked Tony Mossett sneeringly.

"No, but others have, an' they claim—"

"Ay, ay!" exclaimed Felix. "Many have seen the accursed ship. For a hundred years she has been seen by other ships while they were rounding the Horn. Look ye, shipmates, when the vessel that sailed in fear of God was off the coast, laboring slowly but successfully to get around, lo! Vanderdecken and his doomed ship would appear in the tempest-laden air. What did you say her name was, Jerry—the Snyder Zee? Ay, ay, I remember. Well, the Snyder Zee has long since grown storm-beaten and ill-looking, and her crew, being all old men, have long white beards and wear old-fashioned clothes, and when they see the Heaven-favored ship they stretch out their hands and beseech help. But help they can't get off the Cape. No boat would live in that boiling, wind-lashed sea. So it has been a hundred years, those doomed, helpless, wretched Dutchmen fighting the elements and begging help, oft appearing like ghosts to more honest eyes."

"That's the way it is told by those who claim to have seen the Flying Dutchman," Jack added, smiling carelessly.

"Claim!" echoed Felix. "It is true. I've talked with men who have seen the ship. All is so, all is true."

"Gammon!" cried Tony.

"You don't believe?"

"Not I! The Flying Dutchman is a silly legend. There never was a Vanderdecken, and those who claim to have seen the ship either saw some modern, honest vessel, or lied like thunder! Flying Dutchman be darned!"

"Fool!"

The word rang angrily through the forecastle, and we all turned to see Jerry Whitebone who had spoken, and I now saw that his face was pale and took that made me think of pictures I had seen of crouched tigers. His gray eyes were narrowed, lips and wrinkled, and he glared furiously at the scoffing seaman.

Tony took the word ill and leaped to his feet with doubled fists, while Whitebone, with a catlike movement, sprang to have a set-to, but Jack, the boss of the folk'le, interposed his big body between and restrained the storm with a mixture of authority, humor and tact that made me again one in our quarters, and that the subject of the accursed ship and crew was dropped for the time.

My nature was so impressionable that the talk took deep effect on me. Yesterday, and presently fell into thought, meditating on the strange fate of Captain Jacob Vanderdecken, in this mood, an hour later, when Tony, chancing to observe it, addressed me:

"Hey, Nat, what's that?" A contemptuous curl of his lips, 'isn't that Flying Dutchman out of your head yet? Why, you're getting quite sensitive."

"If the ship has been seen," I replied diffidently, "it must be so."

"Gammon! Bah! Lies and folly! There never was a Vanderdecken. Take on some horse sense and drop it. Don't be a fool!"

I lacked the courage to reply to him, and, as I had not begun it, I did not insist upon the subject, and we let it drop.

The following day I was on deck with my watch, and Whitebone was also on deck on duty, I happened to meet Jerry Whitebone. He had always been the most silent, least liked hand before the mast, and I had received few words and little attention from him. Now, with a pause and look that made me strong light, he suddenly paused, started and looked hard at me, his eyes narrowing as his lids inclined to each other.

"Nat Bell," he exclaimed, "you have black hair and deep blue eyes."

It was true that I possessed the unusual combination, but it was certainly not remarkable to me. But Jerry seemed to find it so.

"Yes," I agreed.

"Ah-h-h!" he murmured, still staring hard. "What's your full name?"

"Nat Stanford."

"From New Bedford?"

"Of course, I signed the articles from there, like the rest of the crew, but I was born and bred in Fairhaven."

"What will you do when we get to the Horn?" he demanded, with a thoughtful pause.

"Come back in the Saucy Jane."

"There are fine coasters that run along the coast of Brazil, I've—"

"I signed the articles for the full voyage."

"Do you mean to follow the sea always?"

"I want to be captain some time," I said, my face flushing.

He led me on to a subject dear to my heart, and I fear I must have launched out on uninvited description of my pet ambition. My father and an uncle had been captains, and I was born for the sea in the same honor. I talked freely for some minutes, with a pride and look that made me not noticed, finally, that Jerry was not listening. He had been for some time, as I stopped, whereupon he again murmured:

"Black hair and blue eyes!"

He left me with the same, and a call from the mate sent me about my duty, so I saw no more of him for hours, and not that time Jerry gave much attention to me, and was very sociable and friendly, and never those eyes of his were used on me. "Black hair and blue eyes!" What was to me a trifle, must have meant much to him.

Ten days after our folk'sle talk, when we were off the Cape of Good Hope, a squall, and matters went hard with us. We not only lost our main-mast, but started several generally and seemed afraid that we were in danger of being water-logged. We rigged jury-mast easily, and got our cloth to drawing, but stop the many leaks we could not. Before the squall struck us we limped down the Brazil coast with pumps going night and day. Despite our deplorable condition we had fine, fair weather finally, and with our cargo less hurt than was to be expected.

In that port our captain, who was full owner of the Saucy Jane, and well along in years, had a stroke of paralysis, and was ingenious offer and sell the ship rather than linger to have her repaired. The hour it was known that we were to be minus our berths Jerry Whitebone went to the captain to ship on a coaster, dwelling eloquently upon the fitness and money considerations of the field, but I gave him no encouragement. I wanted American shipmates, not foreigners.

Jerry was hard to shake off, and he hung to me with a persistency that made me really amounted to pleas, and all the while he looked hard at my black hair and blue eyes, which then seemed odd to me.

He had not given up hope when, one night at two o'clock before the sun rose we were been trying to find place for all his hands, came and roused me and Jack Golden out and stated that our chance had come. The Yankee brigantine, John K. Munroe, about to sail for New London, suddenly found herself short-handed and had room for a few hands, and our captain had chosen us for two.

As a result we toted our kits to the brigantine, and before the sun rose we were creeping out of the harbor, a cargo of sugar and coffee in the hold, and at least two light hearts on the deck, for Jack and I had struck a good berth.

During the next four years I was always shipmate with Jack, and throughout that time I never saw or heard of Jerry Whitebone.

CHAPTER II.

VICTIMS OF THE SEA.

In the year 1894 the ship Cousin Polly cleared from the port of New Bedford for Melbourne and California ports. Two things made the day when we cast off from the wharf memorable to me. The first was that it was my twenty-first birthday, the other that I was mate under Jack Golden. It was my first step toward the master's cabin, and I was both proud and happy. I had passed over four years in the forecastle, and learned to admire the 'fore-themast hand deeply, but my ambition necessarily took me away from them. Nothing short of a captain's berth would suit me.

I had only one regret when we sunk the coast of my native land, and that was that I was separated from Jack Golden, but he had broken a leg in a gale shortly before, and as we were running for Cuba to leave Bedford, and could not ship again so soon. As the voyage to the California coast was so long, it would, at the best, be many months before I should see him again.

The Cousin Polly was the neatest craft I had ever been in. She was of five hundred tons, built of live oak, under the eye of a builder's skill. Her lines were fine, and she seemed made to ride the sea. She had been the prime feature in the building, but then Captain Golden, who was a stickler for staunchness with a mania fact in a remarkable degree. Her cargo was miscellaneous, the goods for sale to be collected, together with boots and shoes; hardware of all descriptions, coffee, sugar, spices and the like, together with spirits in casks, and a number of gay dresses and other trinkets. Her captain was Asamon Roper, and her first mate, Peter Filbrown.

Mr. Filbrown I took a liking to worry us. We were strangely lucky as to our brother, and our cabin was filled with cargo packed, rarely having to shorten sail, and never encountering a severe squall.

I was a happy young man in those days, thanks Jack's tuition I had learned my trade well, and had been boarded with promotion to an able seaman in every respect. Now, as first mate, I was about equal to the situation. I knew the trick of handling sails, of steering, of reading signs, of splicing yards, gaskets and the like were old friends. I knew how well how to work the wind to the full, and how to coax the new ship proper if the breeze hauled, while the man at the wheel kept her steady with only the pressure that I had "come in through the hawse-hole."

"This not to boast, but to say that I was a real son of the sea.

Off the north coast of Brazil we made a bit of bad weather, though it bothered us little, and we were all pleased to find that there had probably been a tearing squall to the southward. At that time this seemed a small matter, but it was the beginning of something that colored my whole after life.

The next night I had the middle watch, and, as usual, I had the deck to myself. The wind waxed running high so that I turned in, but I was awakened by Mr. Filbrown, and slept until called for the forenoon watch, at the same time I received some news.

During the time that the chief mate had the deck a vessel, two shipwrecked sailors had been picked up, the sole survivors of a boat load that had perished heavily upon their craft. This gave me interest enough in the matter, and events of the sea must of necessity appeal to all well-constituted minds, but my interest was then far from severe. As I have been picked up during Mr. Filbrown's watch, I had a right to the yarn, and I gave it more the attention they needed.

The two men on deck at the strangers were not to be seen, and I was told they were somewhere below. Then I learned that their ship was the Bright Day, bound from Salem to Buenos Ayres. Further particulars I left to be given for several hours.

When the rescued men came on deck again I was relieved from the middle dog-watch, as I was crossing the deck I chanced to look aloft and saw a bit of canvas upon which brought me to a halt. On the windlass a man was sitting, his knees drawn up to his chin, resting his arms on them, and his chin upon his hands. There was something in the attitude that seemed to fasten my gaze, but I failed to see wherein it was peculiar. The man was a stranger to me, or so I then believed, and I wondered why I was interested.

Resuming my way I attended to my business, but, turning, I again had the man under my eyes, and again I halted right. Not only the position but the face was familiar to me. I failed to see understood until, as I subsequently paced along the lee rail, the recollection flashed upon me abruptly.

The man was Jerry Whitebone.

He was in a sitting posture, but I did not rush to greet him. He had never been friendly to me, but neither had I any particular warm recollection of him. In a way I was glad to see him, and was glad I was not cared about him. It occurred to me, however, that it would be only decent to go to him and say a few words, and I had hesitated I don't know—Captain Roper called me to the quarter-deck for a while. When I was again at liberty I started to regain my former position, but naturally that Jerry was no longer on the windlass, and then discovered him coming toward me from the forecastle with a bundle in his arms.

The last four years had not improved his appearance, but, notwithstanding my manner, he looked respectable and inoffensive enough. I saw in his air of mingled eagerness and deference I went to meet him without delay.

"How are you?" was my greeting, and I think it was friendly.

"Mr. Stanford, sir," he replied quickly, "I thought it was you. The hands mentioned your name, and I took a look at you, but I was uncertain, at first. You were a slender boy when I knew you before, but you have grown big in stature, and you seem fit to hoist an anchor if need be."

"Hardly that," I said, laughing. "Still, I'm four years older than I was. A boy of sixteen is only a yearling colt. Well, Jerry, I hear you have been in trouble with the sea."

"A shipwreck, sir, sure enough. It was the barkantine Bright Day, Captain Roswell master. We ran into a hard squall, and she sprung a leak so bad that she foundered in a few hours. Some of the men were lost in the blow, and only six of us were left to take to the boat. The skipper and three hands went in one, though what became of them I don't know. My mate, Solon Carr, and I were in a small boat, and we were picked up."

"Hard luck, Jerry!"

"The sea is a cruel master, sir."

"And Jack Golden is sailing. Were you long in the Bright Day?"

"It was my first voyage in her, Mr. Stanford."

"What was her cargo?"

"Mostly merchant goods, sir, and in bales. Some manufactured Northern products, too, but not so very much of that sort. All at the bottom of the Atlantic, now."

"Lucky you were not an owner."

"But I was, sir!" Jerry exclaimed. "I had a venture in her, a considerable one, and I hoped to make money out of those goods. I was first mate, too, Mr. Stanford."

"Indeed! Then I offer the time to congratulate you on your promotion, for I can see you are hard hit by the loss of the goods."

Whitebone had grown decidedly serious, and now he wiped away a sudden perspiration from his face.

"It was awful!" he declared. "It isn't that I am greedy for money as money, but I had planned—"

He stopped short, wrung his hands, and then forcibly added:

"Seven years' toil gone!"

"Old shipmate, I'm very sorry. It is hard to see such a hope as yours go to smash."

"Yes—when so much is at stake!"

With this he clawed about his neck-kerchief, as if his breathing was impeded, and, looking to the sails and rigging, as I could not bring the lost ship and cargo back, nor could I make his money less good, and I was ever ready to help the needy and lack a long ways of dealing "nuts. I was of the truth in the words of Jerry's grief. His expression changed and he fixed his gaze upon me with severe equity.

"Your eyes are blue as ever, sir," he said, in a queer way.

I remembered something I had the same as forgotten long ago. Whitebone's words had once before about my eyes, and blue eyes was dim with age, but it came back at his repetition. Jerry's voice was sweet over me, for I was unable to set his words down as an ordinary comment. It was not as if he had remarked on my physical peculiarity, of which all men have many. It was the truth he had spoken, for he had some mysterious idea back of it all.

"Blue, as ever," I answered.

"It was to be expected, of course. Do you go all the way on this voyage, sir?"

"Why, certainly!"

He fell silent, but stared at me oddly, as though studying me deeply. It was both attentive as ever, and as I saw no sign of impatience, I ventured to inquire in courteous words and manner.

"Possibly, Jerry," I resumed, "we shall soon have chance to put you on board a passing ship, so you can reach Buenos Ayres. Is that where you want to fetch to."

"Very likely," he agreed hastily. "Well, sir, I am truly glad to see you again, and to find you in command of mate. You were a civil lad when we were in the Saucy Jane, and a boy who carries a modest tongue

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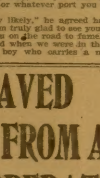

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makes friends and deserves help from them. Because you were that way I found you agreeable in the old days. By the way, you left Rio Janeiro suddenly, then."

"Yes. I had opportunity to sail in the brigantine John K. Munroe, and as she was laden and ready to cast off I had not time to bid friends good-by."

"I was sorry to lose your company, sir. But, sir, I'll take your time, and you are an officer, so I'll have you to mind."

He went, and I began pacing again. Whitebone had brought back memories of my first voyage, and I gave some time to thoughts, but there was not food enough for long reflection. From that time he and his mate fitted into our forecastle easily, standing watch and working their way manfully. Jerry, having been first mate of the Bright Day, might have claimed some special privileges, but he did nothing of the sort, and Captain Roper, a man who never labored hard and shirked all responsibility with indecent unconcern if he could, did not press any honor upon the Bright Day's officers.

The night of the rescue I had the deck for the middle watch, of course, and as I stood by the halyards with my back to the cabin and my starboards idling about, and with the rigging creaking gently before the same breeze that made everything draw, but barely heeled us, I suddenly remembered something more.

The day when I first heard Whitebone mention Carr I had looked and blue eyes was the day I had first heard the story of the Flying Dutchman, and the vain efforts of the Dutch ship to round Cape Horn. Now it was easy to see in my first doubting of the cape, and shipwreck had brought Jerry into my presence. It was a bit odd, and, somehow, I felt to meddling about Vanderdecken and his alleged history.

I recalled sailors believe in such story. They could not fail to do so when divers old salts stoutly avowed they had seen the century-old ship fighting the squalls off the cape, eagerly trying to get around, but falling as they had failed for a hundred years. I was among the few unbelievers. Willing to admit there might sometime have been such a Vanderdecken, I was wholly unwilling to admit that he and his crew had ever been fought for so long to double Cape Horn.

I set down as romance a sailor's yarn, and, after a time, tried to drop the subject as unprofitable, but it returned again and again, and when I had been relieved and gone to my bunk, I dreamed of Vanderdecken, of the ghostly ship and its ghostly crew.

My prediction that we would soon sight a ship in which Whitebone and Carr could sail for home was near-by when I made it, take. We ran down the coast day after day, fetching nearer the famous Cape, and long ships for home were not to be had, while the rescued men stood their watch, but they took at the vitals of our company toiled with the crew, and our skipper seemed content. He had two hands who had not signed the articles and drew no pay, to wit, Jerry, though hardly a first class sailor, was always willing, and hailing and holystoning the deck, and swinging aloft in the rigging, and Carr was never seeming to think his dignity imperiled.

A Jerry was more of it until we passed 50° S., which brought us near the Falklands, and, in the main course of events, hard upon the doubling of the Cape, but a change was at hand.

One evening I went below at eight bells, leaving Mr. Fillebrown and his larboard division on the first night watch. It was a fell asleep quickly and was fast in the arms of Ned when I was hanged violently against the wall and nearly thrown from my berth. I awoke to find matters at sixes and sevens, the world howling a wind and blast, and Cousin Polly heeling to the starboard, and on the deck a medley of shouts and heavy tramping, together with a thumping on the forecastle as I called all hands.

Understanding that we had run afoul of a squall, I lunged into my clothes and rushed for the deck.

CHAPTER III.

THE WRECK OF THE COUSIN POLLY.

As I bounded up the companionway a dash of brine came at me like a tiger in its lung, and most of the night was before me, then I put my head higher and into total darkness. Every lantern was out, and we were practically in the sea with a plunge under us. The Cousin Polly was almost on her beam ends, the deck dangerously slant, and what should have been air was a sheet of spray and dense water.

An instant I stood trying to see, rather than looking, and then we were smitten by a mingled gust of wind and roaring wave that completed our calamity. The mainmast, already burdened with canvas, snapped near the partners and went crashing to starboard, splintering and beating down the bulwarks.

Dragged more to the lee by the blow and burden, the ship flung her weather rail aloft, giving me a deck along which I slipped until I brought up in the scuppers.

It was hard usage, but the narrow escape from going overboard served to arouse me to a sense of self-protection, and from that time I took good care to have my feet under me and my hands on something to which I could cling. I heard Captain Roper shouting, and made my way toward him. I found him in the darkness, and we stood together, stormbeaten, but stubbornly resolute. He saw and recognized me, and stopped his shouting.

"Fillebrown has done for us," he cried, almost wildly. "He had the deck and should have smelled the squall, but it got by him and hit the ship. I won't say more about him now, for he went overboard at the first gust. He was a dead man, and we are no better. The Cousin Polly is doomed, and so are we."

I was staggered by this faint-heartedness, for it was fit carriage in a skipper, but the captain had never been top lofty as a model shipmaster, being too easy going in some ways.

"We must save her, sir!" I shouted back. "She will pound to pieces in half an hour."

"We must abandon her," he cried, and he cut away and then we can hope to get on board the Bright Day."

"No use to try. Still, I've given the orders, and if the men are not all lost overboard—"

The rag of an sx fell upon my ears, and I ran to leeward. If Roper was down in the mouth he was not imitated by the hands, for the men were at the dragging mainmast, and the clash of steel on wood was answered to my ears by shouts, quickly and saw Jerry Whitebone at the front, with Bijah Stray and Rob Dixon and Bijah Straw were slashing away in unison with his strokes. For the time being the wreckage was the most pressing of the situation, and I stood over them, eager, but, as I had no fear about her ropes, not shrill enough to the fight deserved. It was nothing less, for the mast was a dangerous battering ram as sharply all the while.

It was a long and hard job, but they knew what to do, and finally the axes had severed what was necessary, and then, as luck would have it, the ship fell about to port and the broken mast slid overboard.

Whitebone had won the day for the time a problem if anything had been gained, but I had not seen her rescuers

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The Stolen Maidens;

Or, The Fate of White Slaves

By Elizabeth Butler

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CHAPTER I.

DURING the last two years several exciting events had marred the calm of the lazy old town of Plainville, for in that length of time several young girls had mysteriously vanished, leaving no traces of their whereabouts.

Matters had reached a state where no young lady of Plainville dared venture outside the door of her home in the evening without a stalwart male protector.

The girls who had disappeared were from all grades of society in the little town and numbered eight in all. The daughter of the leading banker had been the first to go, and the daughter of a poor washerwoman the last of the list.

The prettiest girls had been chosen, and although after each disappearance armed posses had scoured the vicinity for miles, and large rewards offered for any information relative to the girls' whereabouts, no clew could be found.

Plainville was not alone in its affliction, for from several smaller towns near-by came similar reports, until the parents of pretty daughters lived in constant fear by night and day, lest they, too, lose their treasures.

Among the active workers in the search for the missing ones was Horace Brown, who, with his young and beautiful wife lived in a small but artistic house in Plainville.

Horace Brown was forty years of age, or thereabouts, a fine looking man, who lived a quiet life. He had come to Plainville some time before the troubles had commenced, and his wife had followed him some weeks later.

He was universally liked and respected, and had given his occupation as "literary work." Just what he was laughingly stated ever having done anything worth while. It was rumored that he made an ample income from his pen. As he had no other visible means of support, this was the accepted theory.

Mr. Brown was superintendent of the Sunday school, and a leading many of the young women who had disappeared had been known to him personally. He had often expressed fear that his wife might become a victim, and in his own genuine, he had sent for a detective to come down from Chicago to take up the search where numerous others had failed.

Detective Ralph Allen had, on the day our story opens, stepped off the train which had reached Plainville in the late afternoon, and after making inquiries concerning the way, at the small hotel where he left his bag, had gone straight to the home of Mr. Brown.

A neat maid-servant admitted him to the house and took his card to Mr. Brown, whose sitting-room was on the second floor of the tiny house.

CHAPTER II.

Ralph Allen looked about the livingroom into which he had been ushered. He was surprised to find so much luxury exhibited in the home of a "rube," as he mentally termed a resident of the sleepy little town.

The thing to which he had been admitted, opened into the livingroom, which was really large, and connected with the diningroom by means of a large double doorway, hung with rich portieres.

On the floors were Bokara rugs of luxurious texture, and a baby grand piano was well placed between two windows. Everywhere were books, and a few good etchings were on the walls, which were tinted a soft grayish green, against which the mahogany furniture looked rich and warm.

Ralph had a keen appreciation of the beautiful, and he decided that the owner of this pleasant little home was a man of highly cultivated tastes, which impression was heightened by the appearance of Mr. Brown himself, who came into the room and greeted him in a cordial manner, making a very agreeable impression on the young man.

After the first greetings were over, Mr. Brown invited his guest to look over his little De private office.

"You are to stay to dinner with us, of course," he said. "and after dinner we will talk over this terrible thing, and you shall draw your own conclusions and decide what course to pursue. Now I want to show you the pride of my life, next to my wife, of course."

They passed out of the door and down the flower-bordered walk, and Mr. Brown opened a high gate which led into a garden at the rear of the house.

The garden wall was some ten feet high, and thickly covered with Virginia creeper. The host explained that a heavy line of spikes edged the top of the wall, "to keep out the boys," he said, with a chuckle, "the mischievous little rats. I don't bear them any grudge, though they have stolen some of my finest roses, but I've seen to it that they can't get in now."

Ralph was delighted with the sight which met his eyes as the gate was opened. Beautiful roses were everywhere, red, white, pink and yellow, climbing, bush and tree. Never had he, nor had he seen such roses. At the back of the garden was a small summer house, the walls were covered with tea roses of all colors.

Mr. Brown enjoyed his guest's appreciation to the full.

"I don't very often have a chance to show them to a stranger, and I'm glad of the opportunity," he said.

At they stood drinking in the beauty of the rose garden, some one indoors struck a few chords on the piano, and a snatch of song floated out on the evening breeze—a low, sweet love song which Ralph had never heard before, though music was one of his especial hobbies.

There was beauty and pathos in the really fine voice, and a nameless something which held them spellbound, till the song stopped abruptly, and the singer broke off with a sudden clash of chords.

Mr. Brown glanced proudly at Ralph. "My wife's favorite song," he said, "she has a beautiful voice, one in a thousand, I think." He added that he thought dinner must be about ready, and led the way back to the house, where Ralph was escorted upstairs and given an opportunity to brush up a bit before dinner.

Mr. Brown led him into his own room, which was connected with a small, whitetiled bathroom, and having done everything to insure his guest's comfort, left him, remarking that dinner would be served in half an hour.

After a quick plunge and a general brushing up Ralph felt himself much more presentable than when he left the train after his dirty journey from Chicago.

He found Mr. and Mrs. Brown in the livingroom, and as he was presented to Mrs. Brown he was surprised to find that she was a beautiful young woman, instead of a matronly person, as he had imagined her. She had large blue eyes, very dark and curling, and a cloud of golden red hair, which suited admirably the brilliance of her complexion. She spoke little throughout the meal which followed, and immediately after withdrew from the room.

Mr. Brown led the way into the livingroom, poured out the coffee, lighted a cigar, and passing some really fine cigars, ill one, and puffing it in keen enjoyment, commenced the story of the mystery which had been the cause of his appeal to the detective agency in Chicago.

He gave the names and addresses of the girls who had disappeared, and stated the known facts of the case in each instance.

Then he came to the case which interested him most, and the disappearance of the daughter of his pastor, who, he said, he could not believe had been more than ten years.

"I see," said he, "that I am, in a measure, responsible for this girl. She was here visiting with my wife, and she had been very a severe attack of sick headache, to which she is subject. I myself escorted her home. It was just dusk when I left, and it is but a ten-minute walk. I left her at her gate with the others, and I have never found the slightest clew to her fate."

"Just as we reached the gate, Mr. Byles, a mutual friend, passed, going in the opposite direction. He spoke to him and she left me and started up the walk and to her door, which is about a hundred feet from the gate, and disappeared in the house, which extend down the walk to the gate. It would not have taken her three minutes to reach her house; it was not entirely dark, and yet she never reached her door."

"What could have happened to that girl, in less than speaking distance of myself, of Mr. Byles, and her own home, I can't imagine, but I'm not going to give up looking for her till I find her.

"And now," said Mr. Brown, looking at his watch, "it is time we were going to bed, I'm sorry I can't ask you to put up here, but we have only six rooms, livingroom, diningroom, kitchen and bath, and my wife's room and my own, so, even our spare room has to go home nights.

"But if you will come up in the morning I'll take you to see the rooms in the house of the girl I particularly mentioned. He is almost too busy to come down to see you, but he will talk to us, and perhaps you may learn something which I failed to, and which might lead to the girl's disappearance."

They shook hands cordially and Ralph passed out into the street.

He reached the hotel at twelve o'clock, and as he did not feel sleepy, took a book from his valise and read for an hour or two.

He then went to bed, and after speculating for a few minutes on the case which had called him to Plainville, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

Nothing seems to excite the average human being quicker than the report that a murder has been committed near-by, and Plainville was no exception to this rule.

Consequently, when, on the morning after Ralph Allen's arrival, the news spread like wildfire through the small city that Horace Brown had been murdered during the night, an excited crowd gathered in front of the house, and surrounded the police who were there the murder had been committed.

They gave way, however, to the crowdedly asking questions of the policeman who guarded the gate, and failing to obtain any information, fell back disappointed, to talk and repeated over and over the little that had been learned. Horace Brown was held in a great deal that was merely conjectured. The policemen, however, who was very popular man in the town, took great pleasure in refusing to add to his reputation for surliness by not answering in the most all questions, but even by prodding a few of the more troublesome ones with the butt an energy which showed that he would like to try a few prodding experiments on the boys and young men who composed the greater part of the crowd.

Finally Ralph Allen arrived, and pushing his way to the gate, he showed a star to the policeman on duty, who immediately lifted the fastening to the gate and allowed him to enter.

"I'm from Chicago," said Ralph, briskly, "and I want to see the chief. I have a case about the murder. My chief has wired me to investigate, and me everything, no matter how unimportant it may seem to you."

A five dollar bill changed hands rapidly and the impassive face of the policeman grew quite animated.

"Well," he began, "all any one knows yet is that when the servant girl came at seven o'clock, as she does every morning, she found Mrs. Brown lying near the steps on the side porch. She had her night clothing on, and she was unconscious. The door was wide open, and the girl ran in to find the doctor. She called Mr. Brown at times, and when he didn't answer, she rushed upstairs and looked into his room." Here Ralph interrupted him.

"Was the door closed?" he asked.

"No, the door was open, but Mr. Brown wasn't there.

"Not in his own room, then?" said Allen.

"Well, go ahead."

"When she didn't see him she thought he had gone for the doctor, who lives just around the corner, and she went on to Mrs. Brown's room to get something to throw over her shoulders, for when she got there she found the body of Mr. Brown, and everything was all torn up, as if there had been a terrible struggle. She was so horrified that she screamed and screamed till a neighbor, who was passing, heard her and ran in to find out what the trouble was. They could not find out at first Mrs. Brown to bed, where she is now. They put her in that condition, which hadn't been easy on her. She has regained consciousness, but she is very ill indeed. Probably she had had a blow on the head, or maybe the shock was too much for her. The doctor is there now. The servant has gone into hysterics, and they have taken her home. That is all we have been able to learn, and it is probably tell more when she gets her right mind again."

"Well," said Ralph, "I've got orders from headquarters to find out this thing, and as happened to be here on business, and they sent a telegram for me to take hold of it. I suppose I must go ahead."

The officer hesitated.

"I suppose so," he said finally. "my orders are to keep every one out, but I guess I can make an exception in your case."

The detective laughed, and passing up the steps, entered the house. He first glanced through the rooms as one would who was familiar with them, as indeed he was, for Ralph had been to Plainville a twelve o'clock on the previous evening, after the dinner party at which he was the company of Mr. Brown, as we remember. Ralph walked up the hall and into the fine livingroom who had been such a kindly host, and who was now lying upstairs, foully murdered.

He soon shook off the feeling of sadness which possessed him, and passed through the rooms, eagerly searching everywhere for some object which might give him a clew to the murder.

Having thoroughly searched the lower part of the house for a possible clew, and finding nothing which he could seize upon, he passed outside in order to search the grounds immediately around the house before going upstairs. He could find no footprints under the windows, and no signs of a forced entry were visible on door or window castings. Therefore he came to the conclusion that skeleton keys had been used by the murderer in effecting an entrance to the house. He passed completely around the house, and returned to the porch, where Mrs. Brown had been found. The vines, which covered the porch were thick and heavy, so they formed an excellent screen, which explained why Mrs. Brown had laid there till discovered by her own servant, instead of being seen from the road by some early passerby. Ralph walked down the steps and looked around the base of the porch. He found that the roots of the vines where they were thickest, near the ground, it seemed something rather firm, and, stooping to see what it might be, he found a small bottle, with a glass stopper, which his experienced eyes told him had laid there for some time, as it was waterstained and dirty. He found nothing else of no value in the search in which he was engaged, he crawled, dropped it into the pocket of his coat and re-entered the house. He found he passed through it to the chamber where the murder had been committed, and where the body still lay, though some time had elapsed since the discovery of the crime.

CHAPTER IV.

Used, though he was, to scenes of violence and bloodshed, Ralph shuddered on the sight which met his eyes as he entered the room. A terrible frenzy of rage had evidently possessed the murderer. Pictures were torn from the walls, chairs were overturned, and articles scattered about the room. On the floor, in a pool of blood, lay the body of Horace Brown, torn ear to ear, and numerous knife wounds in the body. The features of Horace Brown had fought manfully until he was overcome. Ralph carefully noted the position of the body, he scanned each square inch of space in the room, his trained eyes overlooking everywhere for something—anything—which might help him solve the mystery. But he was forced to admit that he often said "Give me the motive and I will give you the murderer." But try as he might, he found nothing in the room on which he might seize for a possible clew. He made note of everything and left the room, thinking that he would hear Mrs. Brown's statement when she should have recovered her reason and was in a condition to be interviewed. Having ascertained that she had fallen into a deep sleep, he was forced to wait, and he suddenly became aware of the fact that he had had no breakfast yet, though breakfast time was long past. Therefore he returned his steps to the hotel.

After taking a cold plunge and eating a hearty meal, sat down and glanced at the morning paper, and having finished that, threw the paper aside and leaned back in the Brown home.

As he passed up the steps, a young man, bag in hand, opened the door from the inside and stepped out, but, stopped short as he caught sight of Ralph's face, and

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"I might say the same to you, Bill," said Ralph, as he grasped the proffered hand. "What are you doing here, and most especially in this house? On professional duties, I suppose, same as myself. Have you anything you can tell me to help me out?"

Doctor Denton, familiarly known as "Bill," looked keenly at his friend for a second. "Well," he said at last, "I can't say that I can help you any, but as you can't find out anything in here now, you had better come down to my house, which is only a block away, and I'll tell you what I know. You may draw your own conclusions."

Ralph turned and followed the young doctor, and they passed down the street, talking of various persons whom they had known at college, for they were old schoolmates, and had been great friends, though they had seen nothing of each other for two years.

Doctor Denton stopped before a small house and led Ralph into what he called his "den," for he was an unmarried man, and merely occupied one room of the house they had entered.

He bade Ralph be seated and filled an old pipe, saying Ralph a cigar. When they were both comfortable he asked Ralph how it happened to be in Plainview, and particularly how he came to know Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Ralph told the story of the errand which had brought him there, and Doctor Denton shook his head gravely when he mentioned the mystery of the young girl's disappearance.

"Yes," he said, "it is indeed a puzzling affair, and though I have thought a great deal over the matter, I have been unable to arrive at a conclusion."

He smoked in silence for a few minutes, and then continued:

"But you wanted me to tell you what I think about the murder which was done last night. I will tell you not only what I think but what I know. I do not know what interested Mr. Brown, but I can tell you something which may help you solve the mystery. Before we go over it may I lower my voice, for walls have ears, especially some walls."

Ralph leaned eagerly forward and Doctor Denton whispered to him for some time. When he finished Ralph straightened himself with a low whistle.

"Well," he said, "it may help in solving the case, and, so help me, I'll run it down by the ground, if I can. I've made a study of old man, and I needn't caution you not to repeat what you've told me. I want to have the affair straight, if I can."

At this moment a boy came rushing in to the doctor with an imperative summons, and after promising Ralph to look in on him at his hotel, the doctor left the house, and Ralph walked slowly toward his temporary home.

His mind was in a whirl, and he felt completely at sea for anything to follow. Mechanically he thrust his hands in his pockets and one of them came in contact with the pencil and paper which he had used earlier in the day. He was about to toss it into the street, but on second thought he opened it. It contained nothing but a few cards, some pieces of folded paper and a memorandum in a pass book. A handsome face, and the scrawl, "Yours Frank," across the lower part.

Still uninterested Ralph proceeded to examine each of the cards, and was surprised to find that with one or two exceptions they bore the names of persons living in the most notorious house of ill repute in Chicago. With quickening interest he unfolded the small pieces of paper, which proved to be puzzles to him, and which he could not understand. There were six of them in all, made out in pen and ink in style of a rebus, reading as follows:

"Received payment for Myrtle, two hundred and fifty dollars ($250.00). May 1, 19—."

There was a signature at the bottom of each receipt, and, though Ralph recognized the writing as the same as that on the face of the photo, he could not distinguish the last name, it being scrawled and blurred in each case.

One receipt was for "Ruth," another for "Lucy," and so on throughout the six. Finally Ralph put them in his pocket with a determined look.

"Well," he said, "guess I'd better go back to Chicago to begin my search. I'll see, however, if I can find out anything more here."

CHAPTER V.

"As he wanted to hear Mrs. Brown's story, he again went out upon the street, and soon reached the Brown house, where the same policeman, who had been there earlier in the day, was still on guard. He smiled broadly at Ralph, and in imagination saw another bill pass from Ralph's hands to his, as one had done earlier in the day.

Therefore he readily answered the questions put to him, and told Ralph that Mrs. Brown had come to her senses, and had told of lying in her room, being unable to sleep on account of a severe headache, when a masked man had stepped from the

"What is this girl's rightful name?"

shadows of her bed and approached her. She had screamed in fright and Mr. Brown had rushed into the room. He had thrown himself upon the intruder, and she had watched them struggle together for a short time, she being too frightened to move. Finally she had rushed from the room intending to bring help to her husband, but as she had reached the outer door she was struck on the head and knew no more till she had come to herself in Mr. Brown's room, where she had been carried.

She had not yet been told of the tragic result, and continually asked how her husband had fared, and wished to go to him immediately, should he be so badly hurt as to be unable to come to her.

An old colored woman was finally persuaded to break the sad news to her, and came out of the room with an awed face, while wild wails of unearthly lamentation floated after her. The good old woman broke down and cried, "She just gave me one look after I told her," she said, "and then she put both her tiny little hands up in her beautiful hair and began to laugh and laughing. I just couldn't bear it, so I came right out and left her there. I reckon she's gone insane and I feel it's all my fault for telling her." The good creature sobbed bitterly.

At this moment Doctor Denton, who had been hastily summoned, came out of the room where Mrs. Brown was, and spoke kindly to the lady.

"Don't worry, Mrs. Potter," he said, "Mrs. Brown will be shortly in all right again, and you are in no way to blame. I assure you of that. Mrs. Brown is comforted, went home with a heavy heart at thought of her husband's deep sorrow.

After another confidential talk with Doctor Denton, Ralph decided to start for Chicago on the earliest train the following morning. He retired early, as his train would pass Plainview while at half-past five the next morning, and he felt the need of a good refreshing sleep.

On the train which bore him toward his home city, the next morning, he made numerous entries in a small memorandum book, which he always carried and frequently consulted when engaged in solving a particularly peculiar or baffling mystery, and he examined the Brown affair as the most extraordinary which he had ever been brought into contact with.

CHAPTER VI.

He arrived in Chicago at about five o'clock, and, after telephoning for some time to the police station, took a cab and was driven immediately to the address given on the memoranda which he had found in the card case. He soon reached the house, an imposing brown stone, in a fairly good residence district of the great city.

Telling the cabman to wait for him, he mounted the steps and rang the bell. A colored butler opened the door and scanned him narrowly, as he asked his name.

Ralph handed the negro a card on which was scrawled a few penciled words.

"Give this to Madame," he said authoritatively, "and tell her I am waiting, but a patrol wagon will stop here in ten minutes unless I give a sign that it is not wanted as it goes by."

The negro, forgetting his dignity, scrambled upstairs and almost immediately returned.

"Step inside, sah," he said, opening a door leading into a richly appointed parlor. "Madame will be down directly, sah."

Madame did, indeed, rustle noisily into the room, raggling her fashionable skirts after her, her bleached head held high, and a color which was not all rouge, flaming in her cheeks.

"What is the meaning of this?" she asked, almost choking with rage. "How dare you come into my own house and threaten me with the police?"

Ralph looked at her steadily, but did not speak, and she continued:

"I have done nothing to warrant your intrusion, and you had better state your business and go."

Ralph still looked her steadily in the eyes for a second.

"Come, Blanche," he said slowly, "I know your record, and more, too, and what I particularly want to say to you is that I have come to see about that Plainville business."

He was watching her steadily, and noted the color fade under her rouge, leaving her almost ghastly, and her eyes evaded his.

For a moment she seemed about to choke, but she regained her composure almost as suddenly as she had lost it, and also faced him, battle in her eyes.

Ralph still looked her steadily in the eyes for a second.

"Come, Blanche," he said slowly, "I know your record, and more, too, and what I particularly want to say to you is that I have come to see about that Plainville business.

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"Plainville?" she said slowly. "I have never heard the name."

At this moment the distant clang of a gong was heard, and Ralph stepped to the window.

"Well, Blanche," he said, "I tried to let you down easy, but there's the police patrol. They have ways to make people tell what they know at the police station."

The woman's face twitched convulsively, and she grasped his arm.

"For heaven's sake!" she gasped, "don't let them come here! I'll tell you all I know!"

Ralph stepped directly in front of the window and made a signal, for which the driver was evidently watching, for he passed the house slowly and continued up the street.

"Now, Blanche," said Ralph sternly, to the thoroughly frightened woman, "they are coming back in fifteen minutes. If they don't see me at that window they'll stop. You know what that means. Now you have fifteen minutes to tell me how many girls from Plainville you have in this house, and if you don't, I'll find out anyway, so you had better own up right now. Then I want you to bring them down here and line them up, for they go back home tomorrow."

The woman looked up at him with a sullen expression on her face.

"How many do you think you can safely plot to their homes?" she sneered. "How many do you think I have here?"

Ralph looked at his watch.

"I'll soon know if you don't care to tell me," he reminded her.

She touched a button on the wall, and the negro glided in.

"Pal Marie to come down—you'll probably have to carry her," she ordered, and sat back in her chair.

"Well," said Ralph, "aren't you going to bring the rest?"

She laughed a low, cruel laugh, and stretched herself as a tigress might.

"Ah, Mr. Allen, the rest would have to come too far to get here in fifteen minutes. They started from New York yesterday, on their way to China, where, I trust, they will be far happier than they were here, for one of the girls I have the warmest lot of girls I ever dealt with. Guess they wish now that they had stayed home where they were well off. Instead of kicking up a rumpus, they are quiet and entertaining."

At this moment the door flew open and a girl was pushed into the room so violently that she fell to the floor.

She was up again in an instant, and took up a defensive attitude, as far from Ralph as she could get.

Her face was swollen and disfigured with much weeping, and her flesh, wherever visible, was literally black and blue. She said not a word, but looked where looking at her captors, but her eyes glanced from one to the other in a way that suggested fear on the verge of insanity or delirium.

Ralph looked at the poor, abused young child—for she was little more—and great rage welled up in his heart.

"What is the rightful name?" he asked.

At this moment the patrol bell sounded, and Ralph stepped once more to the window.

The continuation of this story of the White Slave Infamy will be found in next week's Ledger. If you like the Ledger, and we feel sure you do, we would like to have you subscribe for it regularly, and also regularly. A great many thrilling and unusual stories will appear in the Ledger during the year. You will find it a weekly treat, hence you had better send in your subscription now. Let us hear from you.

Women of the Arctic.

Every spring hundreds of brides journey to Alaska and Nome—fully as many would go north, with more or less trepidation, to be married under the very roof of heaven in the neighborhood of the Arctic circle grows warmer each year. Alaska annually sees little the brides are "cheechalkos," or tenderfeet. After they have watched the ice floes and real "sour dough," they want no sympathy because Pete and they "are country born." Flour is $30 a ton and lemons $1 a dozen.

Ask the Alaskan who will find fault with Alaska and so every one is satisfied, the mining camps at Dawson, Fairbanks and Nome, or the cabins out along the creeks, miles and miles from what we would civilization, hold only happy housekeepers, women who know more about canned goods and what can be done with a tin of beans than anybody on either continent.

Everything that comes to their doors is canned, milk, eggs and potatoes, as well as the vegetables that we all use. In the

larger camps fresh vegetables are brought in by steamer in the summer until the shops bloom with a wealth of succulent green things, but only the anecdotes of these delicacies reach "the creeks." The gardens at Dawson are famous, for almost any vegetable will grow if the housewife will bother to plant it. Although the season is short the sun shines night and day and the cabbage keeps the same working hours.

Condensed milk is the Arctic housekeeper's standby and you would not believe how much was used unless you saw the pile of empty tins. Every woman has to learn to make muffins and cake all over again until she knows just the proportions of milk and water that will produce the light and feathery result. Canned eggs offer a similar course of study and so do tinned potatoes to the woman who must serve three palatable meals a day from canned goods or dried foods.

It is a wild, free life these Arctic women live. They know how to shoot and can keep the larder replenished when the men are busy. They can also take a big pan of pay gravel and wash it until the specks of gold are free from dirt. In their fur parki and muckluks they can trot beside the dog sled on the winter trail, and when the journey of several hundred miles is over they can play Mendelssohn or Chopin on the piano that takes up half the room in the little cabin.

"We never sleep," declared a happy Arctic housekeeper. "In the summer it is light for twenty-four hours and it is not worth while to go to bed, and in the winter when it is dark for twenty-four hours, we have to be doing things to forget the darkness, as there is no chance to sleep."

But whether they sleep or not they look fresh and unfagged like the days they go forth to *so* horribly meet.

She Wants a Bonnet.

The manager of a department store received the following order from one of his out-of-town customers, who wanted a bonnet:

"Measure of head from ear to ear over top of head 12 inches; from ear to ear under my chin 9¼ inches; from forehead to back hair 7 inches. I want a black lace bonnet with streamers and rosetts of red or yellow ribbon and would like a bunch of pink Roses or a blue plume with a black jet bucket. Artifishals air still the stile I want—a bunch of grapes or a bird's nake somewhare. I do not want anything too fansy, but if you think a wreath of pansys would look good why put one on. I have some good pink ribbon bear at home so you need not put on strings."

Possibly the South Pole is lying low and waiting for an American discoverer.

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War of the Airships;

or, Blocking the Japanese Invasion

By Paul Gray

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE TERMS OF PEACE.

As he neared the earth and could see distinctly with the naked eye the destruction which the guns of his aeroplanes had wrought, Captain McKay was shocked at the spectacle.

The panic and wild flight of survivors toward the sea coast had partially subsided and some semblance of order was coming out of the rout, but the scenes where the deadly rattle had struck and scattered terrifying slaughter about were sufficiently unnerving to explain the flight of those who the army of the invaders had been thrown.

Dead by hundreds, and wounded by the thousand, mangled in limbs and bodies in a way that precluded the possibility of recovery, littered the ground in frequent places.

The roads along which the columns of the army had been moving, were clogged with in inextricable mass of dead and living victims. Survivors, in their terror, had abandoned their comrades and their guns and quitting the blockaded roads, had fled across the open fields.

Coming still nearer, the American leader could see the upturned faces of thousands of soldiery, standing in a solid mass, their spreading equipment with the awe of stricken men.

With a final circling swoop, the Captain brought his aeroplane gracefully to earth almost beside the staff from which the great white flag fluttered.

A Japanese general, his face betraying the anguish he felt for the disaster that had befallen his army, stepped forward.

"You are the leader of those airships?" he asked in stolid MOC.

"I have the honor," was the response of the American as he touched his cap and stepped to the ground.

"General Matmo, our commander-in-chief, wished to confer with you. Please accompany me."

The two walked across a small field to an adobe but. Entering its only room, McKay saw, reclining on a rough couch, a bandage about his head and his right arm in a sling, the blanched-faced leader of the Japanese invasion.

The raditz, he thought, had evidently been no respecter of persons in selecting its victims.

In one corner of the room, before a table, sat an operator, busy with the flags and "cracks" of a wireless outfit.

General Matmo turned his palped eyes on the American.

"Well, young man," he began brusquely through an interpreter, "you seem to have got us."

"That's what I was ordered to do," was the quiet reply. "I'm glad that I have accomplished it so soon."

"You led the airships that drove off our fleet, too?"

"I did, sir."

"Who'd have believed it possible?" Then, after a pause, during which he vainly tried to suppress a moan of pain, he went on: "We are retiring, as you see."

"Permanently, or temporarily?" McKay asked promptly.

"I would be insane to think of continuing our campaign in the face of the experience of our navy last night, and my army this morning. With your strange little guns and your ships that fly so well, have ruined all our plans. You could wipe us all out in a day. Wireless messages from the fleet told us what damage you did there."

"Let us understand each other at the outset," interjected McKay. "I came down here because you sent for me. That means you wish to negotiate. Well, you will have to deal with the chief officer in command overhead with orders to renew the attack if I do not return within one hour. That is also a warning, sir, that you must treat me fairly."

"You need have no fear. I want to save some of my army. I recognize the absolute futility of making any headway against your aerial equipment."

Then the old man's voice broke.

"I am already in wireless communication with my whole army, spread out in the villages. Through that we have made a proposition of peace."

"May I ask its nature?"

"We offer ten million dollars for the privilege of returning to our own land. Is what you have left of them—in safety, and leaving for ever."

Captain McKay smiled broadly.

"That's only a trifle," he said. "They'll not consider such an offer."

At that moment the wireless sputtered and crackled with additional vehemence and the operator handed over a message to General Matmo.

The pain in his face grew as he read the few lines. Translated, they were:

"Your proposition impossible. We will grant you safe embarkment to your ships, but not for less than fifty million dollars."

The message was dated from Washington and was signed by General Wayne.

The Japanese leader consulted with his aides, and then began a writing. After a considerable conference, the interpreter turned to Captain McKay, and said:

"General Matmo fears his government will not agree to pay such a huge sum as your country demands. He wants time to cable to Tokio."

"He has just forty minutes left of the hour's armistice granted when I arrived. If I don't get a definite answer within that forty minutes, our bombardment will be promptly renewed.

"It's impossible to think of trying to communicate with our people at home in forty minutes," was General Matmo's impatient reply. "It would take a day to get a satisfactory answer."

"Then you agree to pay the fifty million?"

"There is nothing else to do. Yes, we will pay the fifty million."

"To make sure of it," went on McKay, coolly, "I'll have to insist upon holding one of your army corps as well as a hostage until those negotiations are fully confirmed by both Governments."

"You are in a position, young man, to dictate your own terms."

"One thing more: What about your army that started to invade the United States through the Mexican border?"

"They were ordered back last night after we received wireless messages from the fleet, telling us of the damage you had wrought. They are now in retreat."

"And what does Mexico say?"

"Oh, we've provided for safety there by allowing her a million dollars for the violation of her territory."

"You cheap skate," was the Captain's sole response.

"I'd like to see that aeroplane of yours," went on the General painfully, "but these wounded men—"

"I should be pleased to explain it to you."

"With what kind of ammunition did you do all this damage to the fleet?"

"Your army suffered from our radite, a new secret explosive used by the American Government. We also used another, pellite, against your fleet."

"Ah," was the General's response accompanied with a heavy sigh, "this will quickly end the campaign."

"For which the whole world ought to be grateful," was the response feelingly. "After the sights I've seen this morning, it almost makes me long for fighting."

"But think how I must feel, young man, being one of the chief sufferer," said the General with a certain dignity.

And thus hostilities ended. Word of the armistice and peace was quickly spread throughout the Japanese army and stayed the rout. Within a few days, however, his army had soared away to his fellows and with the fleet, transports and convoys steered with the rest of his squadron a straight way back to Los Angeles. Here they descended while the Captain repaired to army headquarters to file his report to General Wayne in Washington.

That done, he sought out a hotel and, utterly exhausted by his strenuous operations, sought the refreshment of a comfortable bed.

Along toward the middle of the afternoon when, through the press, the public was fully informed of the astonishing rout of the Japanese army, Captain McKay was awakened by a knocking at his door.

"What's wanted?" he inquired from the depths of the bed clothes.

"Half the city is outside in the street, waiting to do you honor," was the reply. "And besides there are important dispatches from Washington awaiting you."

McKay hurried into his clothes, meantime ordering the dispatches sent to his room. The first he opened read:

"The President, the nation and the army join in thanking you and you corps for your most wonderful feat. We await your further movements and will reward you appropriately. WAYNE."

The second message brought a glow to the Captain's cheeks. It read:

"My hero. I'll name the day as soon as you return.

EDNA."

Touching his lips to the name, the Captain, with a light heart, went down to receive the acclaims of a cheering city, which had but just learned that it had been saved from annihilation by his soldier fents.

The end.

The Guile of Man.

The wise man of Pittsburg lives in Shadyside. If there's one thing he loves to do when he gets home it is to read a book in peace. One night when he arrived home he was informed by wife and daughters that they were to have company that night. The Wise Man's face fell as he contemplated the new volume under his arm, "one of the six best," etc. Who are they? O, some women friends. "I'll bet this game," said Mr. Wise Man to himself. Immediately after the evening meal he dashed out to East Liberty, bought one of those cut-up picture puzzles, with 250 pieces in it, dashed back again, and when the company arrived and had been comfortably seated, he interrupted the chatter to bring the puzzle on the unsuspecting women. They fell into the trap. The only table big enough for the game was the large dining table. This was cleared, and all gathered about to place the big picture together.

When they were well absorbed, Mr. Wise Man took his book off in some dark, comfortable rocker, and read until aroused after midnight by the departure of the company. The picture lay on the dining table about one-quarter complete. The guests were invited to come again.

The next morning breakfast was served in the kitchen because the table because mother and daughters refused to disturb a puzzle until they had completed it. For a week the puzzle occupied the dining table and mother and the girls would work at it on odd moments, while Mr. Wise Man read his books.

Got What He Wanted.

Mayor Stay of Atlantic City was praising the excellence of the past summer season. "Never," he said, "have I seen so many beautiful women here, nor such crowds, nor such decorum. They who prefer rowdiness and vulgarity have all gone to Coney Island or elsewhere. They are like old Jerry Patterson.

"Judge Hindslip was going to give a big party and on the day he issued the invitations to old Jerry, his man, and Jerry, after delivering them, turned up drunk.

"Judge Hindslip looked at the old servant in disgust.

"'Jerry,' he said, 'what does this mean?'

"'M-means I'm drunk,' Jerry hiccoughed.

"'Nonsense,' said the judge. 'And what do you mean by getting drunk?'

"'It ain't no—nother fault,' said Jerry, 'its fault of them invitations. Every time I hic—delivered one to asked me to have a hic—drink, and that's—what made me drunk.'

"'Terrible! terrible!' cried Judge Hindslip. 'Have you no more respect for people in this township?'

"'Sure,' said Jerry, 'but I shent—hic—their invitations by post.'

He Hated to Waste Anything.

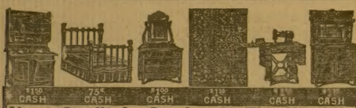
Fetzer (in street car)—See that man sitting at the corner? He's a big fat fellow who takes up so much room?

Wallman—Yes.

Fetzer—Do you know why he doesn't give up his seat to that little thin woman standing in front of him?

Wallman—That's easy; he's too selfish.

Fetzer—No, you're mistaken. That's Millionaire Grippon. He made all his money by practicing economy and the habit of wasting nothing is so strong in him that he would feel guilty if he gave his seat to a woman who was not large enough to fill



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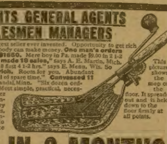

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IN A HAUNTED HOUSE.

"Ha! ha! ha! do you suppose that I would be afraid to stay all night in your haunted house?" cried Benjamin Gilbert to several of his boon companions.

"Well, I tell you what I will do, Ben," replied one of them; "I'll wager a champagne supper for the party that you dare not remain in the house all night!"

"I will accept the wager. Now where is this house you talk so much about?"

"It is on the outskirts of the city," was the reply, "and was once a fine residence; but it has been neglected so long that it is now in a dilapidated condition. It has been untenanted for a number of years, and is known as the haunted house. There are strange sights in it, they say—such as a white figure passing the windows of the second story, while the room is lighted by a reddish glare; and then, as the figure disappears, the light does also, only to be followed by a succession of different-colored flashes of light. Then all becomes quiet for several hours, when the same performance is sometimes repeated. This does not occur every night, and sometimes there are intervals of several weeks without anything unusual being seen. At times there are also strange noises heard, like the rattling and clanking of chains, and the Lord knows what else. No one knows who is the owner. It is currently reported that a young married couple moved into it some years ago, and that the first night they were murdered; and since then there has never been found any one who possessed the courage to occupy it more than a few days, or weeks at most. These are the current reports of generalities, and the particulars you will doubtless find out for yourself before you win your bet. Now when will you go and face the ghost in his den?"

"I am ready at any time—so suppose we start tomorrow afternoon?"

"All right. We will all accompany you to the house, see you safely inside, and then wait for you at a hotel not far off. But bear in mind that one of us will be on the watch all through the night; and if you remain there until daylight the next morning, I will consider that I have lost my bet, and will promptly pay it without demur."

The next day, about dusk, they went to the haunted house, and Ben Gilbert obtained entrance by climbing up a kind of shed and arbor which reached to the second story of the back part of the house.

As soon as he was in the room he called out:

"Good-by, boys, I'll see you in the morning," and, closing the window, he disappeared from view.

"Well, here I am," he thought, as he examined a pair of revolvers that he had brought with him, "in what is called a haunted house. When I was a child I used to believe in such stuff, but since I have become a man I don't. No, there is no such thing as a haunted house, and if the credulous neighborhood really see or hear anything, there must be a cause for it, and that cause I am bound to find out. For the first thing I will examine the house."

The room he was now in was a large bedchamber, with a mantle in the center of one of the side walls, and a large closet on each side of the mantel. There were two doors to the room, one leading into the corridor, and the other into an adjoining room.

He visited each room in the house, but without finding anything to excite his suspicion.

After making thorough investigation, he returned to the second-story room, intending to pass the remainder of the long, weary hours before morning in that apartment.

Time drew slowly along, and at last he fell asleep, and did not awake till midnight, then he awoke with a start.

Surely he had heard a loud noise! Or had he been dreaming?

No! there it was again—sounding as if some one had thrown several tin pans down a flight of stairs.

He immediately jumped up, drew one of his revolvers, quietly walked to the door leading into the corridor, softly opened it, and stood there and listened, but all now remained still.

"I must have fancied it," he thought, as he retraced his steps and lay down again on the floor.

He was nearly asleep for the second time when he perceived a flash of light shoot across the room, and again heard the same clattering noise as before.

"There is no mistake this time," he mentally said, "and as there must be a cause for it, I am now going to find it out. Ah, by Jove! there is something or somebody moving in the other room; and as I wish to watch without being seen, I will just enter one of these closets and be on the alert."

He had just concealed himself when he was again startled by a sound like a dog furiously barking, and the front room was illuminated with a red glare.

Having been in the dark for several hours, the glare of light in the other room was almost blinding.

"Can there be such a thing as a haunted house?" he asked himself. Bah! I don't believe it. But what is the cause of this? Heavens! if I am not mistaken I smell brimstone, too! Eh? What? Is that the moving spirit they tell about? Pshaw! I don't believe in spirits. It is coming this way now, and I'll soon see if it be living or dead!" and with that he raised his revolver and was about to fire.

But just as he pointed the weapon at the figure it seemed to fade out of sight, and all became dark and quiet again.

Half stupefied at this strange mystery, the young man remained silent for several minutes; and then, just as he was about to come forth from his place of concealment, he was again startled by a succession of flashes of different colors.

"What can it be? I must and will find out!" he muttered in a low, determined tone, as he stepped forth and advanced to the room where he had seen the flashes of light.

He had only proceeded a few steps when the lights once more disappeared, and all again became silent and dark.

He stopped and listened, and thought he heard some person moving, and then it sounded as if some one were descending the stairs.

"If that is a ghost, it walks like a man," he concluded, "and I am going to follow it and see for myself."

He then pulled off his boots and descended to the first floor, but saw nothing. He heard the footsteps, however, and followed the unknown by the sound.

The sound led him on through the different rooms on the first floor, then into the kitchen and thence down into the cellar.

As young Gilbert reached the head of the stairs leading into the cellar he perceived a light, which had the appearance of proceeding from a dark lantern.

"I am not mistaken," he thought, "for if there are ghosts, they do not require the aid of man to assist them in seeing, and therefore they would not use a lantern; and if not a spirit, it must be human; and if human, it must have a purpose for its actions, and that purpose I intend to find out."

Being in his stocking feet and in the dark—for the light from the lantern shone on the opposite wall—he was enabled to approach very near the object without his presence being suspected.

The figure then went up to the wall, and after standing there a few seconds, a large stone swung outward, as if on hinges, and the figure disappeared through the aperture.

"So—so, my worthy ghost, I think I have found out your little game, or a part of it, at all events, and I now propose to discover the rest of it," soliloquized Gilbert, as he entered the opening through the wall.

On the other side of the wall he found a flight of steps, which descended a short distance, and communicated with a narrow passageway, just large enough to allow an ordinary sized man to walk along in a stooping posture.

He advanced along the passage for about twenty feet, and then came to a room, which was lighted by several lamps, and in the center of which he saw a man in the act of beginning some work.

He stood there and watched him for at least an hour.

There was no mistaking his occupation—he was a counterfeiter—and had all the tools, presses, and paper necessary to carry on his nefarious business.

Now, what was the best thing to be done? Should he attempt to arrest him? Or had he better retreat and inform the proper authorities of what he had discovered?

He wisely decided that the latter plan would be the most judicious and the safest; and so he returned to his room and remained there till morning, hearing nothing more from the ghostly counterfeiter.

As he left the house he was met by his friends, who anxiously inquired what he had seen and heard.

He related all, with the exception of the discovery of the counterfeiter.

They wanted to know if he was not frightened, and whether he could account for the strange events.

He put them off as best as he could, not wishing anything to be made public until he could have the man arrested.

They had their champagne supper that night, and as he could not well get away from them during the day, he had to delay his visit to the police authorities until the day following.

He went with two officers to again visit the house, but, although they searched and examined every part of the cellar, they were unable to discover the secret door leading through the wall.

They did discover, however, in the second story front room how the different colored lights were produced.

It was by means of chemicals mixed with powder, such as are used in making the displays of fireworks.

In one of the closets in the kitchen they found three or four tin pans, which had served to make the clattering and alarming noises we have described.

Two officers each night watched for the return of the ghost, or counterfeiter, but they were not successful for nearly three weeks.

One night, as they were on duty as usual, they heard the sounds of the tin pans falling downstairs, and then they at once proceeded to the cellar and there concealed themselves and waited for their man to appear.

At last he came, just as had been described to them by our hero, and they silently followed him into his working room underground.

They waited until he had got fully under way, so as to catch him in the act, and thereby make out a stronger case against him.

Then they quietly crept into the room he was in without being seen by him, because he had his back toward the entrance.

Both together then rushed up and seized him, but the man fought with the desperation of a maniac, and it was as much as the two could do to overpower him.

It was well for Gilbert that he had not undertaken to arrest the man at the time he discovered him, for it is more than likely that he would have been killed.

The prisoner was handcuffed and taken out, and it was soon after discovered that he was one of the most notorious counterfeiters in the country.

The next day the papers had a full account of the haunted house and the arrest, giving the credit to Gilbert.

No one was more surprised to see the article than the friends who had proposed to him to stay all night in the haunted house.

"What did I tell you?" he said to them, with an air of triumph, when next they met. "Did I not say there was no such thing as a haunted house, where ghosts and spirits roam about at will, kicking up all sorts of nonsensical didos? Let me tell you that ghost stories are for children, not men—that there is always a cause for everything that happens—and if you are not a coward, and have sense enough, you can discover what produces such supernatural and marvelous results."

And his friends admitted that, whether right or wrong, their brave and daring comrade was at least entitled to draw his own conclusions.

Damp Invitation.

Rodrick—That is a humorous agent selling those bungalows. Although the roofs leaked he still invited us in to inspect.

Van Albert—H'm! What did he say?

Rodrick—Why, he said: Come on in, the water's fine.

The Golden Spider;

Or, THE WOMAN IN BLACK

By Major Albion F. Grant

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CHAPTER XIII.

SYBIL TURNS DETECTIVE.

SYBIL GRAY, late of Gunner's, was putting the finishing touches to a toilet adapted to the street. She had not left her room since her rescue by Cecil Talbie, when he arrived to bail the work of the deadly cone in the hands of the Woman in Black. The young woman still felt the effects of her exciting adventure, and were it not for an important errand she would have remained at home.

Outside the sun was dissipating the dense fog which had hung over the city, and the air was yet chilly.

When she had adjusted her toque she picked up her little purse and left the house.

She was free at last from the drudgery of Gunners. Her life in the great, bustling establishment had not been a pleasant one, owing to the slavery of it, and she had more than once congratulated herself upon her enforced emancipation. She doubted not that she could obtain employment whenever she desired it, but as yet she had not made up her mind to apply at any place.

Once on the street, she walked rapidly and at last turned into a new thoroughfare which she had not visited for a long time.

When she stopped it was in front of a house with long, narrow windows, the curtains of which were lowered, indicating almost that the place might be untenanted for the afternoon. Sybil rang the bell and was admitted by a woman, who smiled as she closed the door.

"I've heard all about it," said this personage as she conducted Sybil to a small parlor leading from the hall."

The young girl started.

"You've heard all?" she exclaimed with a look of surprise. "I cannot imagine how you came by it so soon."

"Oh, my niece, who works in Gunner's, told me of your going away," was the response. "I hope you got your recommend?"

"I got nothing of the kind, thanks to Mr. Joncourt," smiled Sybil.

"Then you must have been dismissed under a cloud. Sophy was afraid of it."

"I haven't come to talk about that unpleasant episode, which I have been trying to forget," responded the girl. Mrs. Jeptha, I am going to catechise you a little if you will submit."

Mrs. Jeptha crossed her hands and fell back in the chair she occupied.

She was a woman of past sixty, but the years had dealt kindly with her, for her complexion was almost peachy, and her eyes a soft blue.

"I'm ready to answer all the questions I can, my dear," she said with a willingness which pleased Sybil. "You can go ahead."

"You told me once, it was a year ago, that you knew Mrs. Poman, the woman who resides in Soho Place."

"Yes, I knew Leone Poman, once," was the reply.

"Intimately, Mrs. Jeptha?"

"Not very. We don't belong to the same class, know. She is wealthy, but I haven't much of this world's goods, though perhaps I have my share."

"Mrs. Poman always rich?" inquired Sybil.

"No, my dear. At one time she didn't have more than I've got this precious minute."

"How, then, did she get all her money?"

"That's the most natural question in the world," observed Mrs. Jeptha.

"Did she marry money?"

"As to that I cannot say. She went abroad years ago and when she came back she wore weeds and announced that she had married an American millionaire, who had considerately died and left her all his wealth."

"Oh!" exclaimed Sybil. "She came back a widow? I see. Some of those Americans are very rich and now and then they die just like other people."

"Mrs. Poman at once plunged into high society and got into a circle and had been admired ever since. It wasn't long before she was at the top of the society ladder and went as far as to be presented at Court. Since then she has held her head very high and her emotions have been the rage in Soho Place."

"Very," replied Sybil mechanically. "It was her wealth that opened the Queen's door."

"You may as well say so. Mrs. Poman, or Leone Poman, as she delights to be called, is cold and cunning. I have known her under both circumstances, though, of course, I haven't the entree to her establishment. You do not know her, my dear?"

"I have met her in the store," was the reply, and the fair speaker colored. "That is, I have met her in a business capacity."

"With a social gulf between you," Mrs. Jeptha observed. "Well, my dear, I will say that your blood is just as good as hers. Since coming back from her long absence Mrs. Poman has made the most of her riches and position. It was said at one time that she was setting her cap for the rich man in Hampton Court."

"I know but one rich man there who is celebrated for great wealth," Sybil said.

"Of course. Old Sam Barlow, the bachelor. I must tell you, Mrs. Poman has had strange friends. For instance, there is Tony Joncourt whom you know, of course—"

"The manager of Gunner's!" interrupted the girl. "Are they friends?"

"Not to the extent of being intimates," replied Mrs. Jeptha. "I happen to know that Tony is her friend. Then, there is a woman of whom I hardly dare speak, for if she knew I had referred to her I might get into trouble."

"I do not want to involve you in any difficulty," said Sybil quickly. "If there is a secret concerning Mrs. Poman or any of her friends, the telling of which may get you into trouble, I shall go no farther."

"Never mind," laughed Mrs. Jeptha. "I have no love for Margaret Mattox who, four years ago, got into difficulty and was transported."

"Was she Mrs. Poman's friend?"

"Yes. She would not be permitted to cross Leone's doorstep now, but I believe they are friends yet. Margaret Mattox helped to forge the name of Sam Barlow and, with her male friend, was apprehended and sent away."

"And is still abroad?"

"No. She is back. But the other day I brushed a woman whose face was familiar, and when I had it all figured out I knew I had seen Margaret."

"Did she recognize you?"

"Seeing that we were never friends I don't see why she should. But I knew Margaret."

"She must have served her time."

"Or—is a ticket-of-leave woman. She was dressed in black when I saw her and her face had that strange heartless look which the newspapers gave her when she was on trial."

Sybil was silent for a moment and then she leaned forward. Mrs. Jeptha was an anxious expression.

"If Margaret Mattox and Mrs. Poman were friends years ago they may still be such."

"I should not doubt it. But now, my dear, let me question you a little."

"Proceed."

"You are more than casually interested in

He saw Tony topple and drop.

Mrs. Poman. And I noticed that when I told you that Margaret Mattox wore black it made you start and look visibly."

"I had cause to, for I have lately had a terrible experience at the hands of a woman thus garbed."

"Mrs. Margaret?" exclaimed Mrs. Jeptha.

"I feel certain of it. Mrs. Poman hates me from some cause, and if Margaret Mattox is still her friend, why may she not be her agent?"

"You mystify me," was the reply. "If I knew what your experience was I might enlighten you."

Thereupon Sybil narrated her adventure with the deadly cone, to all of which Mrs. Jeptha listened with breathless interest.

"You have brought back the past in an astounding manner," she exclaimed. "Before Leone went away, to come back a rich widow, something had occurred to give a great excitement in the city over the magic of a man who called himself the astrologer of Isola. He did the most amazing things and, in consequence thereof, had a good many people coming to him to bind him over for his secrets. In fact, he was besieged by those desiring knowledge. I remember that he had invented several strange devices by which people could be put out of the way. When he was at last driven out by the authorities and his house razed by a mob, many paraphernalia was found which nearly caused the death of one or two officers. Among the things was a cone, a sort of cone, like the one which you have described."

"Horrors!" exclaimed Sybil.

"I will not say that the one from which you have had such a narrow escape, thanks to Mr. Talbie, was among the Indian's inventions, but from what I remember of it you have described it perfectly. Now, Mrs. Poman was among those who sought the astrologer—"

"Please say no more!" broke in Sybil. "I don't want to compromise you in any manner. I can put this and that together and need look for no help. I thank you very much. I shall not bring you into the matter, but I shall go to the bottom of this attempt on my life."

"Have a care, girl," exclaimed Mrs. Jeptha. "If you have enemies, and you seem to have, and if among those enemies are Mrs. Poman and Margaret Mattox, you must look to yourself."

Ten minutes later Sybil Gray stood beyond the threshold she had crossed, and the couple did not witness her flushed cheeks.

"I have gained a point," she said to herself, "for the Woman in Black came from the woman in Soho Place."

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT.

At the very moment of the beautiful Sybil Gray's visit to Mrs. Jeptha, Mrs. Leone Poman of Soho Place came down the luxurious carpeted stairs of her establishment and entered the parlor. Richly garbed, with a profusion of gems on arms, neck and bosom, she took a seat at her table and, for a little while looked around the room.

There was no better furnished house in that quarter of the city. Lavish wealth was indicated on every hand, not only in the hangings of the apartment, but in the paintings on the walls and the Turkish carpets that covered the floor. The web of this spider was known in exclusive circles and the fame of her home, to say nothing of her own, had been proclaimed among the rich and titled every-where.

On this occasion Mrs. Poman seemed at ease with herself. There was a smile of contentment, not so coy triumph, on her face, and when one had recourse to the goblet, which a tripping maid had brought her, her every little languor and her hands smoothed her silks with pride. She sipped her wine with the air of an Eastern princess and then glowed between the effects.

Certainly Mrs. Poman was above interfering with the life of a mere wage earner like Sybil Gray.

She turned her head slightly as footsteps came down the stair beyond the door, and she watched the portal with almost breathless interest.

When the door opened Mrs. Poman was confronted by a woman arrayed in unrelieved black.

"Come hither, Margaret," said Mrs. Poman. "You have slept late, but are in time to share my Tokay."

As she concluded she rang a silver bell and the maid came in.

"Another goblet, Marianne," she said, and the girl disappeared.

The woman, called Margaret, came forward and sank into a chair near the table.

There was much physical difference between the two women. Mrs. Poman was fleshy, while her companion was slender, a striking contrast. Margaret had small but unsparingly coming details, while Mrs. Poman's were large and a little unwieldy.

When Marianne returned bearing on a tray a goblet of Madame's favorite wine, Margaret drew the goblet toward her and sipped eagerly.

"We're on the sunny slope of the hill, don't you think?" said Mrs. Poman with a little laugh.

"Yes, if I did not fall."

"What, there is no doubt of your success, I trust?"

(Continued on page twelve.)

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Knew His Book.

"Perkins entered into an agreement with his wife soon after their marriage, twenty years ago, that whenever either lost temper or stormed the other was to keep silence."

"And the scheme worked?"

"Admirably. Perkins has kept silence for twenty years."

Common Custom.

Mrs. Hicks—The lecturer said that when the Zulu husband has words with his spouse he snakes for his club.

Mrs. Wicks—That's just what mine does.

How It Happened.

Bess—No, I never carry my watch when I go out. I am so careless that it wouldn't be safe. Why, a person could steal anything right from under my nose and I wouldn't miss it. (Then the young man by her side stole a kiss.)

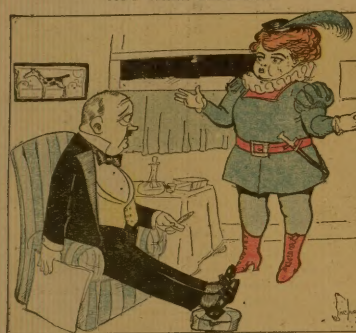
The Long and Short of It.

Mr. Long—My wife manages to keep her boarders longer than you do.

Mr. Short—Oh, I don't know. She keeps them so thin that they look longer than they really are.

TICKLISH

NOT WELL DESCRIBED.



Mrs. Wellbilt—Well, what do you think of my masquerade costume? I am a page, Mr. Wellbilt—A page! Heavens! You look more like a whole volume!

A Slight Jolt.

Sagleigh—As I was going down the—aw—avenue this mawning, a woman came running aftah me, doncher know, and——

Miss Cutting (interrupting)—Pardon me, but what lunatic asylum had she escaped from?

Sagleigh—Why, how did you—aw—know she was a lunatic?

Miss Cutting—You said she was rushing after you, and I'm sure no woman in her right mind would do such a thing.

Love at First Sight.

Friend—So yours was a case of love at first sight?

Mrs. Gotthere—Yes, indeed. I fell desperately in love with my dear husband the moment I set eyes upon him. I remember it as distinctly as if it were yesterday. I was walking with papa on the beach at Long Branch, when suddenly papa stopped and, pointing him out, said: "There, my dear, is a man worth ten millions."

Better Still.

Invalid—The things I want to eat my doctor says are not good for me.

Friend—Then you'll have to change your bill of fare, eh?

Invalid—No; I'm going to change doctors.

Experiences of Ages.

Honorable Patrick Mulligan (on his European tour)—Sure the restaurant kapers over here hov more stine than we hov in New Yorruk. D'ye's moind th' faces av th' waiters?

Friend—They all wear mustaches.

Honorable P. M.—Yis, begob! That's th' way t'tell th' shpalpeens. They can't taste th' soup widout bein' caught.

Good Men Not Needed.

Stranger—I should think such an enterprising, public-spirited citizen as Mr. Goodman would be nominated for some important office in this community.

Politician—He'd run well, but we don't need him.

Stranger—Don't need him?

Politician—No. We're always sure of a big majority, anyhow.

Masculine Intuition.

Mr. Simpkins—Our new neighbor, Mrs. Lumkins, is not a very neat housekeeper, is she?

Mrs. Simpkins—Indeed she isn't. She lets things lay around every which way. How did you know?

Mr. Simpkins—Oh, her husband looks so jolly.

SHE QUIT

But It Was a Hard Pull,

It is hard to believe that coffee will put a person in such a condition as it did an Ohio woman. She tells her own story:

"I did not believe coffee caused my trouble, and frequently said I liked it so well I would not, and could not quit drinking it, but I was a miserable sufferer from heart trouble and nervous prostration for four years.

"I was scarcely able to be around, had no energy and did not care for anything. Was constipated and had a constant pain around my heart until I thought I could not endure it. For months I never went to bed expecting to get up in the morning. I felt as though I was liable to die any time.

"Frequently I had nervous chills and the least excitement would drive sleep away, and any little noise would upset me terribly. I was gradually getting worse until finally one time it came over me and I asked myself what's the use of being sick all the time and buying medicine so that I could be myself in coffee?

"So I thought I would see if I could quit drinking coffee and got some Postum to help me quit. I made it strictly according to directions and I want to tell you, that change was the greatest step in my life. It was easy to quit coffee because I had the Postum which I now like better than the old coffee.

"One by one the old troubles left, until now I am in splendid health, nerves steady, heart all right and the pain all gone. Never have any more nervous chills, don't take any medicine, can do all my housework and have done a great deal besides."

Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Discouraging.

Dick—Yes, I saw Miss Coyne walking through the park and she appeared to be in deep meditation.

Freddy—She did? By jove, I proposed last night and maybe she is thinking about my chances.

Dick—It's likely, old chap. I noticed that she had a far-away look in her eyes.

Continually Thinking.

Newlywed—Why, I never thought of saying until I was married.

Rec. Fiddle, D. D.—And do you now?

Newlywed—Oh, yes, indeed! I am continually thinking how much I might save if I wasn't married.

Where Presents Are Needed.

Mr. Dumpps—This giving wedding presents is something I don't understand.

Mrs. Dumpps—The fact that you don't understand a thing doesn't prove much. What's wrong with giving wedding presents?

Mr. Dumpps—It's just a waste of money, that's what it is. What does a young married couple care for such trumpery? It's old married folks like you and me that need silver casters and sugar spoons, and tidbit dishes and things, to draw their thoughts off of their troubles.

Obeying Instructions.

The green youth who had made his first ascension in a balloon picked himself up out of the ditch and rubbed his eyes.

"Overboard!" shrieked the professional. "What do you mean by wrecking my balloon? Where you found she was falling why didn't you throw out sand?"

"It's because I was obeying your instructions," faltered the frightened youth.

"My instructions?"

"Yes; you told me not to 'lose my grit,' and I didn't."

At the Crossroads.

The motor car tourists, who had just paid a fine for speeding, stopped at the village blacksmith's to have a spring repaired.

"Can't fix it right away," explained the old smith; "there's a job ahead of you."

"Another machine?" asked one of the tourists.

"No; it's the constable's stop watch I've got to tinker with. He's used it so much today the blamed thing's out of order."

AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.

Citizen—Hey, the fire ain't in that harness shop; it's down the street.

Fire Chief—I know it. But, by heck, my helmet's in here gittin' mended and I got to git it before going to any fire.

INTOXICATED WITH LOVE.

Spoonly—I am intoxicated with love for you.

Miss Manypiunks—Oh, I see! And you want to try the gold cure?

What He Had Done.

"I'd be ashamed to beg if I was a big, healthy-looking man like you," said the sarcastic woman. "You ought to look for a job of some kind. Have you done anything at all during the past year?"

"Yes, ma'am, I hev," answered the husky hobo, meekly. "I jist finished doin' thirty days, ma'am."

Question.

Bobby—Hey, mister, pa wants yer auto.

Famous Neighbor—Grkph or mobile.

A Queer Fact.

"Queer, isn't it?" queried the man who begins his questions in the middle.

"What's queer?" asked the innocent bystander.

"That a man with a dollar, a nickel and a hole in his pocket invariably loses the dollar and retains the nickel and the hole," answered the party of the prelude.

Accepted.

Mother—Well, Madge, have you been to that editor again? Has he accepted any of your poems?

Daughter—No, but with my permission he has accepted me, and we hope to "publish" shortly.

A Few Exceptions.

"The course of true love never runs smooth," remarked the maid with the quotation habit.

"Oh, I don't know," rejoined the scanty-haired bachelor. "It doesn't always end in marriage."

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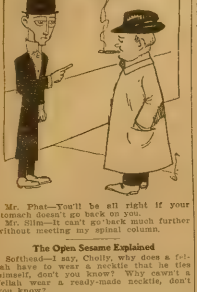
in each town to ride and exhibit sample 1910 Model bicycle. Write for special offer. Finest guaranteed $10 to $27 1910 Models shipped on approval and 10 days' free trial. 1909 & 1908 Models $7 to $12 all of best makes. 100 Second-Hand Wheels all makes and models, $3 to $8 good as new. Great FACTORY CLEARING SALE. We Ship on Approval and allow TEN DAYS FREE TRIAL. TIRES, coaster brake rear wheels, lamps, sundries and parts at half usual prices. Do not buy until you get our catalogue and offer. Write today. MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. 248, Chicago.

TACKLES

Nearly Safe.



Mr. Phat—You'll be all right if your stomach doesn't go back on you.

Mr. Slim—It can't go back much further without meeting my spinal column.

The Open Sesame Explained

Softhead—I say, Cholly, why does a fellah have to wear a necktie that he ties himself, don't you know? Why can't a fellah wear a ready-made necktie, don't you know?

Muddbrain—Cawn't you see, my boy, how it is? It's the social test, don't you know?

Softhead—Any fellah can afford to buy any sort of a necktie, cawn't he?

Muddbrain—Ah, yes; but mere sordid wealth doesn't count in society, me boy. It's brains, culture, wellnement, don't you know?

Softhead—What has that to do with the necktie?

Muddbrain—Can't you see? Society, me boy, admits only those who have bwains enough to tie their own necktie, don't you know?

Generous Meanness.

McEldowney—Why did Scrabbly give his wife a gold present on their silver anniversary?

McHenry—He wanted to kill two birds with one stone.

McEldowney—Two birds with one stone?

McHenry—Yes; he wanted to insinuate that his twenty-five years of married life seemed like fifty so that he could get what his wife to praise him for his generosity.

Tough Luck.

"I bumped up against tough luck this morning," said the man on crutches.

"How was that?" asked his friend.

"Fought started in to tell me some of the bright sayings of his 4-year-old son and help answered the other, 'and having a sprained ankle I couldn't get away.'"

Improvement.

Jack—Before Miss DeThynn's father made a fortune in pork she was long and lanky.

Tom—Well, is she now short and fat?

Jack—Oh, no, she is divinely tall and graceful.

Aerial Somnambulist.

DeMono—Why did Cogger give up those long trips in his airship?

Biplane—Why, he went to sleep one trip, thought he was in his automobile and tried to crawl under it.

The Stand She Would Take.

Rodrick—Yes, the lady orator is one of the most stern, uncompromising women I ever met. Why, I believe if there was an earthquake she would be standing in the same place after it was over.

Van Albert—That's ridiculous. What would she be standing on?

Rodrick—Why, if there was nothing else to stand on she would stand on her dignity.

What's in a Name?

Flywood—Yes, I am going in for ballooning these days, old chap. You should see my new balloon.

Friend—What's the name of it?

Flywood—The Congress.

Friend—Oh, I see, it's a "hot-air" balloon, eh?

He Learned Something.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is worldly wisdom?

Pa—Worldly wisdom, my son, is a perfect knowledge of the failings of our neighbors.

SQUAWK, SQUAWK!

Rooster—Great Scott! I never saw a dog with such a depraved appetite for cocktails!

Cause of His Coolness.

Edith—I wonder what caused Mr. Mumm's coolness toward Helen?

Esther—I heard it was caused by Helen's former fiance, Mr. Flowers, and her carelessness in using capitals.

Edith—I don't understand.

Esther—Why, Mr. Mumm sent Helen a bouquet for her birthday and in her note of thanks she wrote that she "just loved Flowers."

Remind Him of Business.

Gunner—There goes the tobacco king. He is a multimillionaire.

Guyer—Then it's queer he doesn't drive a better team. Those horses look like a pair of plugs.

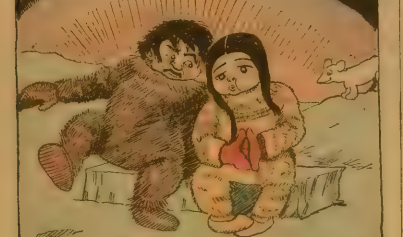
Gunner—Well, I guess he thinks a pair of plugs is appropriate in his business.

Egged On.

Wood B. Actor—It was my ambition that egged me on.

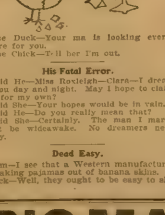
Critic—Yes; but I understand it was the audience that egged you off.

TROUBLE IN THE ARCTIC.



Bill Blubber—Great whaleteeth and walrus jaw-bones!
Miss Aurora—What now, Bill?
Bill Blubber—Why, my arm is frozen around your waist and I hear your pa coming with an icicle.

Just Out.



The Duck—Your ma is looking everywhere for you.
The Chick—I'll bet I'm out.

His Fatal Error.

Said He—Ravielah—Clara—I dream of you day and night. May I hope to claim you for my own?

Said She—Your hopes would be in vain.

Said He—Do you really mean that?

Said She—Certainly. The man I marry must be widewake. No dreamers need apply.

Dead Easy.

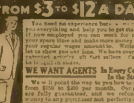
Tom—I see that a Western manufacturer is making pajamas out of banana skins.

Dick—Well, they ought to be easy to slip on.

HARD LOT.

Oh, pity the explorer!
No peace where'er he may roam;
He's snowballed up in polar land
And blackballed here at home.

AGENTS WANTED



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Entered as second-class matter June 20, 1908, at the post-office at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

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THE CHICAGO LEDGER
CHICAGO, ILL.

GENTLE JABS.

The free advice you get is usually worth less.

Cold cash is responsible for many a hot old time.

Few men have the courage to admit they are cowards.

Burn your money today and grovel in the ashes tomorrow.

There is none so brave as to defend the overdone hat pin.

He is a sure-footed mule who can kick the same spot twice.

But a woman can't be arrested for holding us her own trains.

Never forget a friend—especially if he owes you anything.

A poet takes a great load off his mind when he buys a hair cut.

It's often what the wife wants that the husband says he can't afford

The frenzied financier uses the little sucker as bait to catch the big ones.

Nothing pleases a woman more than to have some other woman envy her.

A woman is proud of her wedding ring even if her marriage is a failure.

Opportunity is apt to dodge the man who spends all his time waiting for it.

The trouble with the average man is that his ideals are higher than his salary.

Sometimes a girl imagines that she is in love when all she needs is a square meal.

Some people talk so much that they have no time to listen to anything worth while.

Mr. Taft is morally certain that it is your duty as a patriot to love Mr. Aldrich's tariff.

It's difficult for a man to swallow his indignation after being compelled to eat his words.

It sometimes happens that by the time a young man can afford to marry he doesn't want to.

Occasionally a lazy man is up with the early bird that is served at 1 a. m. with a cold bottle.

Women with the marrying habit are born optimists. They always hope to better it the next time.

And the average man would rather spend a week in jail than attend a reunion of his wife's relations.

Meanwhile much of the money goes into old mattresses that postal banks would get into circulation.

The father who sets bad examples should not be surprised if his son gets busy and hatches them out.

Unless the temper of the people changes Mr. Roosevelt is going to have other chances to decline the nomination.

One of the surest aids to longevity, according to numerous correspondents, is to be born a daughter of the War of 1812.

Occasionally when a woman tells her woman friends what a good man her husband is she really believes it at the time.

When a man says he did a thing as a matter of principle it's a safe bet that it was something he ought to be ashamed of.

The Golden Spider.

(Continued from page nine.)

"Not if the cone worked," was the reply. "I did my part."

"To be sure. Now, Margaret, we will discuss the other one."

"Cecil Taine, as he is called"—

"Yes, the interferer!" cried Mrs. Poman. "While he lives the balance of failure."

"I know. If Marianne had but conquered him when she had him in her hands we wouldn't be discussing him now."

"Marianne is a fool," said Mrs. Poman. "She did all she could, but he proved a cad and got through her hands. Ah, if you had been there, Margaret!"

The younger woman smiled and looked down at her own hands as white as the foam of the channel.

"I, too, might have failed, but I would have given him the adventure of his life."

"I doubt it not, Margaret," said him.

"I fancy the finding will not be difficult. I know where he lodges."

"And you know, too, that he knows the other one—the man of Hampton Court?"

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Poman. "He must not be eight or nine days."

For one brief moment Mrs. Poman toyed with her rings and then, rising, moved across the room.

When she came back to her companion she carried a package, which she opened and cast upon the table.

"It's a king's ransom!" cried Margaret, her eyes opening to their fullest extent. "I never saw such wealth before."

"'Tis the nibbling," smiled Mrs. Poman, running her jeweled hand through the heap of banknotes and the glittering diamonds. "And think of it, and all by our native shrewdness."

The two women, for a while, gazed at the wealth spread before them, and Margaret took up several banknotes.

"I shall live now!" she exclaimed. "I shall be myself again. What shall I buy first? Blakeley's shall see me and I will have his diamond necklace." She paused and left till he takes me for the Princess of India, or the Queen of Sheveda."

"Everything but the ticket-of-leave woman."

At this the face of Margaret Mattox grew dark and her eyes flashed their baleful light upon Mrs. Poman.

"Please don't bring back that accursed past. I have buried it beyond the seas!" she cried. "Don't intimate that I have toiled under a foreign sun with the days eating out my soul and the nights eating the life of the captive tiger."

"Pardon me," said Mrs. Poman. "I did not intend any harm."

"I forgive," and the speaker again ran her hands through the banknotes with a bitter laugh. "It was easy, oh, Madam! We might have got another million, but perhaps it was fair of us to be modest in our demands."

"Oh, cried Mrs. Poman, "there's more where this came. Sam Harlow has more in his bank and we have the key which will unlock it at any time."

"But it's enough for the present. I shall go down to Blakeley's today."

"Before you've found Cecil Taine?"

"I'm eager to inspect and purchase. I want to array myself in the spoil of the Orient and be some one once more."

"I must forbid, and you will pardon me. You will put off your arraying till you've found him."

"And then what shall be my share?"

From beneath her dark lashes Mrs. Poman rewarded Margaret a moment in silence, then she spoke in a changed voice:

"It shall be enough, I think. You will find me no quibbler. I am generous to a fault, my friends say."

"Where are they?" exclaimed the other. "You must remember that I risk my life every move I make. I am the only one to share."

Biting her lips till they were redder than the lees in her goblet, the woman of Soho Place leaned forward and laid her hand on the treasure before them.

"It shall be two hundred thousand," said she in hot tones as her face reated on the face across the table.

Instantly the orbs of the Woman in Black became a volcano of passion.

"And is this all?" she exclaimed. "Your generosity will never kill you, I'm sure."

"But think of the state I must keep up here. Think, for a moment, of the establishment which cannot be maintained without a lavish display of wealth. I must continue in the circle in which I move. I must be the woman about whom all gossip."

While I serve you with the sun-scorched land beyond the sea staring me in the face" cried Margaret. "You offer me a paltry two hundred thousand, while you take and keep all the wealth. I will not slip the wine which might be my own blood."

"Margaret"—

The ticket-of-leave woman sprang to her feet and in striking haste, with her hands reeling on the edge of the table, she was leaning across it with her face close to hers—ing like those of a tigress guarding her whelp.

"No she cried, "you pay me too little for my risk. I have killed for you and am asked to kill again. I have played for millions with Sam Barlow of Hampton Court and won—for you. I ask, then, that my reward be would have defied us. If I had not stood by you in finding him and him with the secret, you would not now be gazing at the wealth before you. Two hundred thousand, is it? What if I should sell the truth to this same Golden Spider? What if I should step from the trail now and let Cecil Taine have his way? What if I should reveal the mystery which the poor child died without knowing? And for all that I have done you offer me a meager share of the blood-money, while you live a life clad in silks which should be rags. Woman, you shall not use me further. I will go back—back to the accursed land or to the bed of the Thames."

With this the hands of Margaret Mattox fell like the talons of an eagle upon the two millions, and with the countless wealth in them she scarted back and flung what she had clutched into the face of Madam.

"Take it!" she cried. "Take it all! One of these days you will cower in your fears and become the laughing stock of those who have drank your drugged wine. I shall go back to the dock. I can once more become the convict, while you will be driven from pillar to post to die at last cursed by the world! Two hundred thousand for a woman's soul? Never!"

Mrs. Poman could not speak. She could only stare at the woman in Black and read vengeance in her blazing eyes.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW MR. SLUDGE RAFED.

Let us return to old Sludge and his mission.

Despite the years that had passed over his head the aged proprietor of the Golden Spider was as lithe and strong as a leopard. He had retained all the life of childhood and his faculties were as good as when he first entered his master's service.

He knew where Tony Joncourt lodged and he determined that it should be the place without difficulty, even after dark. What is the one thing in view he bolted off on his mission.

Tony was never so hard to find on the street where his prey was to be found. The old man knew him and he knew he was as eager as a boy to accomplish his mission.

What if Tony had succeeded. He did not expect this, for the manager of Gunnere's, with ten thousand in his possession would be a hard one to rob, and he would find his way to some club, where he could wrestle with Jack and win or lose to make him rich or poor in a night.

Old Gunner looked up at the house when he reached it and noted that it was quite dark. Tony was not at home. It was an early hour for one of his varied tastes.

Mr. Sludge found the lower door unlocked. It was the custom of lodgers in this part of the city where their lodgers were apt to come in at all hours. Gunnere smiled to himself when he pushed the door open and entered.

No one heard him. Used to gliding through the house in Hampton Court with the noiseless step of a cat, he made his way upstairs and found a door which he knew to be Tony's.

Inserting into the lock a crooked bit of steel, Mr. Sludge had provided himself with he unlocked the door and stepped across the threshold. Stygian darkness greeted him.

Gunnere waited for a moment in the hall listening with all ears, but no sound was heard. If there had been a sleeping person in the room, he would have heard the regular breathing.

"Not at home?" said old Gammer to himself. "I'm in luck."

He found the incandescent and switched on the light which instantly flooded the apartment with a soft glow. Everything stood revealed. There was the unscreened bed in one corner, the table covered like to the middle of the room and the oaken chairs with their pieces of leather for seats.

Gammer shut the door before he proceeded to work.

Tossing across the carpet, he examined the table drawers and then turned his attention to the more bulky pieces of furniture, a dresser and several shelves.

His search was interrupted.

"They must be somewhere, for old Sam was certain that Joncourt had in his possession—a ring, a bracelet and maybe a locket."

Neat Gammer turned his attention to the bed. He turned down the pillows and bolster and ran his hands between the sheets, not overly clean.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, "Is the old man mistaken?"

As a last resort he dived his hands between the mattresses and there mounted uttered a little cry. The searching fingers had touched something.

"It's a cold day," he exclaimed, "when they can't find what they seek, or I can find and find I will."

He withdrew his hand it held a small package, the outer wrapping of which was a peculiar species of heavy cloth.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, as he turned from the mattresses told him that it was not without the ken of Tony's prying eyes. Old Gammer moved toward the table with his find and placed it in the light.

Standing beneath the drop-light he opened the package and looked triumphantly. He had found what he had been sent after. There was no doubt of it, for he held in his hands the ring, bracelet and a heart-shaped locket.

Carefully he folded the covering over his find and transferred it to an inner pocket.

"Now, back before the fun comes," he chuckled. "Sludge is my last errand of this sort. It's risky and I don't want to be arrested on the ground."

His hand went up to shroud his face in darkness when he turned to the door, for another moment the portal swung open and he stood spellbound with his green eyes almost starting from their sockets with horror.

Tony Joncourt stood before him!

Mr. Sludge fell back a step as soon as he could, then he looked into the eyes of the startled manager.

"Well!" exclaimed Tony as he came forward, his face white and determined. "This is an unexpected surprise. What want you here?"

"Tongue can not speak. He saw the look in the eyes of the manager and he pointed to the bed and settle there for an instant.

"It's all up," thought Gammer. "He knows."

"Sit down!" commanded Mr. Joncourt as he came forward, his gaze still riveted upon the face of the old man. "Sit down, I say!"

But the tall figure of the night prowler did not move.

"You've been robbing me," continued Tony. "You've been sent here by your master."

"Whom you've just bled!" cried Gammer, coming. "It's no use to lie, Mr. Tony Joncourt."

Seeing that he had been fairly caught, caught in the act, Gammer concluded to make a clean breast of the whole matter and take the consequences.

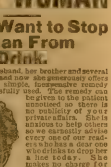
"When a man robs another he must expect to be robbed in return. It's the way of the world, you know."

"Disgorge! Place upon the table there,

WRITE TO THIS WOMAN

If You Want to Stop a Man From Drink.

She cured her husband, her brother and several of her neighbors, and now she generously offers to tell you of the simple, harmless remedy that she so successfully used. The remedy can be given to the patient unnoticed so there is no publicity of your private affairs. She is a woman and knows how, so we earnestly advise every one of you to write her at once who has a dear one to save from a drunkard's grave. A kind hidden friend who makes no charge for this help, as she has nothing to sell she asks for no money and accepts none; so there is no catch to it. Why you should not write her at once. Of course, she accepts that you are yourself personally interested in curing one who drinks, and can not help writing out of mere curiosity. Send your letter in confidence to her home. Simply write name and full address plainly in the coupon below and mail to-day.



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what you've taken from me. Hand over everything or there'll be a missing man in Hampton Court."

"I guess not, Mr. Joncourt," snapped Gammer as the emerald eyes seemed to blaze.

The hand of old Sludge dropped into one of the pockets of his coat and the fingers coiled round the butt of the weapon which Sam Barlow had entrusted to him.

Tony had advanced and now stood at the edge of the table looking down into the eyes of the man who had taken the chair and was studying him with the ferocity of the cornered wolf.

In an instant Gammer [illegible]

"Shell out, thief!" grated Tony. "I don't expect to get away with your [illegible]

Mr. Sludge's hand came halfway out of his pocket and stopped there. The [illegible] had caught on a bit of torn lining. [illegible] very face went white.

"Ah, I see, you came to kill as well as to rob!" shot Tony straight into his visitor's face.

As Gammer tugged with the stubborn weapon the manager of Gunner's shot at him like an athlete. A pair of hands went out, and though Mr. Sludge tried to ward them off they found his person and he was hurled halfway across the room.

"If was to kill if resisted, Sam said," went like a bolt through old Gammer's mind. "I've got the swag and I must keep it."

Both went to the floor and struggled there like German wrestlers, each trying to get the better of the other, twisting and turning without a word passing between them, for it was, as both realised, a battle to the death.

All at once a cry broke over Gammer's lips. His face twitched with a spasm of pain, but he held on.

"The villain has a knife," he thought. "That was the blade I felt, but I'll keep what I've got anyhow."

He found the hand which held the blade that Tony had drawn from his pocket, and twisted the steel out of it by a superhuman effort. Tony uttered a curse as the weapon fell from his grasp.

Freeing himself from his enemy's grasp, Gammer leaped to his feet and jerked a chair from near the table. As Tony rose, he brought the object down with all the force he could command and saw Tony topple away and lay at the foot of the bed. Again and again with the fury of a murderer Gammer dealt the chair blows upon the prostrate man and then flung the chair away.

With twitching face he staggered across the room and opened the door. "There he goes," he said looked back at his work.

He went down the steps like a man in a maze; he left the street door open and bolted out.

He had won, but at what cost?

There was something dark and fresh on his coat, on what his teeth hard as he reasoned that it was not Tony Joncourt's blood.

Over the wet stones he glided, glancing then pressing his hand against his bosom and grating his yellow teeth.

Half an hour later he tottered up the steps of the house in Hampton Court.

He made his way to the door of the library and threw it open.

An old man asleep in a chair, was aroused by the noise he made, and opened his eyes.

A human figure staggered forward and threw something on the table.

"You got it!" cried old Sam. "You found the stolen stuff? The ten thousand are yours, for of course you got this, too?"

"I got more than I went for!" exclaimed Gammer tearing open his bosom. "I got this!"

With a cry, that echoed beyond the apartment, the Golden Spider gazed a moment at the blood-stained clothing and then into the ghastly face of Gammer Sludge.

"Thirty years of service, Master Sam, and this is the end!" gasped Gammer, and with a thud fell like a log at the feet of the money shark of Hampton Court.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD BARLOW'S SECRET.

"I've not been idle, Sybil," said Cecil Tame to his friend in her modest lodgings in Apple Way. "I am getting the threads of this peculiar mystery in my hands and before long I hope to have the skein untangled."

It was the night of Mr. Sludge's adventure [illegible]

"I've been looking into the life of the woman and Blackie."

"Mrs. Poman!"

"Cecil nodded.

"She's had a strange history, that woman has. She has not always been the opulent creature she is now."

"So my friend, Mrs. Jeptha, has told me," answered the girl. "She went abroad some years ago and caught a rich American [illegible]

A laugh on Cecil's part interrupted Sybil's sentence and brought a look of wonder into her eyes.

"The rich American is a myth," he resumed. "Mrs. Poman's fortune is one of [illegible] tions. She may have some reputation as a man-catcher, but she is noted in other fields. The Woman in Black—your friend, you know, goes in and out of the house in Soho Square and there's a link between the pair."

Sybil, silent, waited for him to proceed.

"Mrs. Poman took a trip abroad some years ago. She had a career in Paris, and the United States have been farthest from her thoughts. Just where she met the Woman in Black I do not know, but there is a bond between them. In the first place Mrs. Poman knows some terrible secret which is closely guarded by Sam Barlow, the Golden Spider of Hampton Court. I am convinced that the Woman in Black, who is no less a person than the notorious Margaret Mattoz, transported for forgery, is in collusion with Mrs. Poman and that the two are playing a desperate game together."

"But where do I come in in the mystery?" asked Sybil breathlessly.

"In some way you are connected with the tangle."

"I cannot conceive how."

"These two tigresses believe that you should be put out of the way for their own success."

"But this does not enlighten me."

Cecil leaned forward and took one of Sybil's hands.

"You must not start if I give you my conclusions," he went on. "I may be wrong, but here they are: You are, in some manner, connected with Sam Barlow."

"It cannot be, Cecil, and yet——"

"Wait, girl. Mrs. Poman muses your dismissal from Gunner's. She knows Tony Joncourt, the manager, and had but to ask for your coops to see you thrown out upon the world."

"I've figured out that much," said the girl with a faint smile. "But there I always stop, Cecil, unable to go a step farther."

"Mrs. Poman is concerned in the plundering of Barlow's [illegible]

"What is that——"

"In some manner it is connected with you."

"Impossible!"

"Mrs. Poman muses all lead in that direction: [illegible] aware of your ground before you advance [illegible] and the girl.

"I am making sure of it," was the reply couch in tones of confidence. "We are dealing with one of the coolest women in the world. Mrs. Poman is determined to carry out her plans. She is assisted by Margaret Mattoz, alias the Woman in Black. We are both in their w[illegible] you are now connected with the [illegible] and I as your friend. The [illegible] had been shot.

"Blackmail, do you mean, [illegible]

"Exactly. Today I [illegible] text emerge from B[illegible] takes money for one to deceive the [illegible] Blackie is lower to the Que[illegible]

"Yes. And when a ticket-of-leave woman goes to Soho Square [illegible]

"Sent thither, perhaps, on a m[illegible] Sam from Mrs. Poman."

"Or to purchase for her[illegible] that I read in Soho Place [illegible] her own jewels. She would not send Margaret. I followed the woman some distance and saw her enter a cab. She gave me [illegible] chase, but all trails end somewhere. Mine [illegible] A fare picked up the cab [illegible] up in Black street, the fare got out and entered a certain building. You do not know where Black street is, perhaps [illegible]

"I am not familiar [illegible]

"It is the hiding place of cri[illegible] ex-convicts. The police call it the Botany Bay of London."

"Well? You greatly interest me, Ce[illegible]

"I thought I would [illegible] Margaret remained a full hour in the house. When she came out I got a look at and still watched the number. After awhile a man emerged from the premises and made [illegible] I have since learned that he saw him and then he stood in the dock with Margaret Mattoz. They were arrested and the same crime—the forgery against Sam Barlow. Margaret, I believe, was first located him in a little hole-in-the-wall in Cullip street, not the number, but I'll find it. It was enough to tell me that Margaret and this man are still friends. When a woman has been transported for forgery and one sees a man of that ilk, as I believe Margaret did, one may form ideas."

"But all this does not connect me with these people," said the girl.

"It connected with the great secret, Now," continued Cecil, rising. "I am going to see the Golden Spider in his web."

"And to get at the secret?" cried Sybil.

"To find what [illegible] recovered."

"What if he refuses to talk?"

"He will not," said Cecil Tame, shutting his lips hard behind the last word. "Sam Barlow wants [illegible] and I am ready to speak. If he has paid for the keeping of the secret, he will be [illegible] again, for it's getting [illegible] ideas."

"Have a care," said the girl, her face showing [illegible] that throbbed her heart.

"Trust me, Sybil. I shall look out for the machinations of these creatures. You are safe now. I believe Margaret believes that Blackie could [illegible] work. She will not come back to make sure of it."

Cecil went [illegible] building where Sam Barlow transacted business, but the desk, visible from the street window, was not occupied. He next took a cab and was set down in Hampton Court. In another instant he was at the Golden Spider's door.

It was not the old servant but the Golden Spider himself who swung back the portal and stared into his face.

"You!" exclaimed old Sam as he held the door open. "Come in."

Cecil entered and was conducted to the library.

Old Sam waved him to a chair, which he took, while the millionaire took the other.

There was a pale and drawn face before Cecil Tame. The quick eyes of the old man seemed deeper set than ever and his hands crossed uncrossed [illegible]

He waited for Cecil to speak.

"I have called, Mr. Barlow, to say that I believe you need a friend."

"Pish!" exclaimed the old man. "When I need a friend, sir, I [illegible] I may summon you."

"You are in the net of a lot of villains."

"You are very kind to vouch for this information."

"You have fallen into the hands of the blackmailer, Mr. Barlow."

"Indeed!"

"Let us come to the point without circumlocution. You have been visited by a certain woman in black."

"Now you seem to be coming to the point."

A little smile came to the face of Sam Barlow. He shifted uneasily in his chair, but not for a moment did he take his eyes from the visitor.

"So you deem it your duty to war me, Cecil Tame?"

"My duty lies in two directions——"

"One with me, I hope," interrupted the Golden Spider. "I will show you something."

Cecil followed the old man from the room and up the stair.

Sam Barlow opened a little door with Cecil at his heels and to his surprise the long hands of the old miser approached a key and drew back the drab coverlet.

The movement uncovered the form of Gammer Sludge. A single glance at the recumbent figure Cecil turned upon the man of Hampton Court.

"The last of thirty years of service," said Barlow scarcely above a w[illegible] am now alone in the world."

"How came this about?" asked Cecil.

Slowly the old man's hand uncovered the dead man's bosom and pointed to a clot of blood near the heart.

Murdered!" cried Cecil, starting back, with his gaze riveted upon the millionaire.

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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CHAPTER X.

ENCOUNTERS OPPOSITION.

GORDON GREAVES found in Silas Brangard a man whom he felt he could trust. He was far from being the typical farmer of the comic papers, but a refined country gentleman, who, as a fruit grower and town official, was a man of note in his neighborhood.

There had been a shower the previous night and the country roads were splendid in nature's garb, while the birds and squirrels enlivened the scene and made music fit to entrance a king.

"Hal Davis told me about you," said the farmer as they rode along in Mr. Brangard's covered buggy, "and he said you had played in hard luck lately."

"Which is true," admitted Gordon.

"The city is a poor place for boys—that is some boys," said the big-laughed cheerily. "I reckon you would get on among the sharks after a little."

"After you put my eye teeth out, you mean," said Gordon. Well, I can't say that the eye-tooth did look terrible after the operation."

"No, it isn't," chuckled the farmer. "I was let down when I was a youngster, but not quite so hard as you were, for I lost money without being in danger of losing my life. That man who sent you adrift in a leaky skiff seems to be a scoundrel of the first water."

"That he is. I should like to meet him again."

"Perhaps you may, some day."

"If I do, he won't get away with a whole skin," and the boy's black eyes flashed ominously.

It was ten miles out to the farmer's home, yet the time seemed short to Gordon, who had been entertained by his farmer friend in a pleasing manner.

At the farm gate Brangard was met by a young girl, who gave the elderly man a good hug before noticing his companion.

"There, Ladybug, enough of that. Would you smother your old dad to death just because you like him so? See here. I've fetched a young man who is to work for us. I want you to treat him kind, since he is in hard luck and will appreciate friends."

And then Mr. Brangard introduced Gordon to his daughter Greta.

The girl was a trifle shy at first. She was remarkably pretty, with melting gray eyes and red-brown hair. She looked as if she'd been fifteen, although there were childish actions suggestive of dolls and mud pies.

Gordon liked the girl at once. She made him think of Nada. He resolved to be on his best behavior, since the boy was of good family and possessed the instincts of a gentleman.

There was no work for Gordon the first day. Greta soon became decidedly friendly and showed him over the place, chatting as freely as a magpie ere the day was done.

And as for Gordon, he thoroughly enjoyed himself.

Yes, there comes Cousin Tom," said the girl as they came from out the avenue of trees and down a narrow lane not far from the farmhouse.

A tall, red-faced youth came swinging down toward them. His eyes were bleary with wrath, and his hand clutched a stout stick.

So, this is where you are, miss. Saluted the young fellow, with a sneer. "Your ma wants you right now, Greta Brangard."

While talking, Tom looked beyond the girl's companion, for he wished to see him. Gordon felt a cold chill steal down his spine. He saw at a glance that Tom would have no use for Cousin Tom.

Greta retreated a step, her cheeks crimsoning.

"Did you hear me, Greta?"

"Of course I did," answered the girl. "You yell loud enough to be heard in Milwaukee. She paused and bit her lip. Tom was decidedly a rude port and Gordon felt like thrashing him.

"Well, go on to the house. I will tend to this."

Tom indicated Gordon with a wave of his hand.

"With Miss Brangard's permission I will accompany her."

"You will not!"

A white wrath, blazed in the eyes of Greta's surly cousin.

"This is Mr. Greaves, Tom," ensured the girl, anxious to break the spell that was brewing war. "I was telling him about you. I want you two to be friends, for Mr. Greaves is going to work for papa."

"Mister Greaves, indeed!" sneered the youthful cousin of Greta. "I don't think your mother'll thank you to be seen walking with a common workman."

Again Greta's face flushed, her eyes drooping in mortification at the boorish actions of her cousin. She started to move on, then turned half about and glanced appealingly at her cousin.

"I will accompany you," said Gordon, stepping to her side.

"Go on to the house, Greta," ordered Tom. "I will attend to this hired man!" With the words he struck out, and fluttered nose, Gordon, who was advancing to take his place at the girl's side, and whirled him viciously about. "Your place is in the cow stable, Mr. Greaves."

And then and then Gordon did a foolish thing.

The sneering face of Greta's cousin was so near, his words cut so like a knife, and Gordon's hand was clenched, so it was an easy matter to deal a swift, hard blow squarely upon the nose.

Tom Alway went down like a stricken ox under the butcher's ax. A stream of red spouted from his nose, and flattened nose, besides which he lay quite still, as if dead.

Of course, Gordon was frightened at what he had done.

Greta uttered a dismayed scream and ran to the side of her prostrate cousin, kneeling on the grass at his side. She lifted his head and looked at Gordon.

"Tom, Tom, look at me!" she pleaded in a tearful voice.

No sign of life from the lately obstreperous youth, while the birds and squirrels stood rooted to the spot, unable to move or speak.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" wailed pretty Greta, "the bad fellow has murdered you!" And then Gordon came to his senses.

He knelt quickly down and began chafing the hands of his fallen foe. Soon the burly fellow stirred and opened his eyes. He sat up with a growl, which satisfied Gordon that he was badly injured. Realizing this, our young hero quickly got to his feet, feeling that he had been half wrong in knocking the fellow down.

"He struck me first, after all," said Gordon. "I struck harder than I meant to, but I guess I got what I deserved it."

Greta said nothing, but assisted her cousin to his feet, at the same time brushing the dirt from his clothes with her dainty white hands.

Tom Alway cast cheap enough when the girl cast a withering glance toward him, and said:

"You may go, sir."

Carrying himself with lofty pride, Gordon walked down the path to the gate. He realized that he had made a mistake, yet he was not sorry for it. He could ill afford to be made an outsider. Of course, his act would be reported to Mr. Brangard, which might mean a dismissal from his service.

"I have the blamedest luck out," muttered Gordon as he walked to the front of the house and halted at the gate. He had quite a task to look around and had improved it to good advantage. There were early apples to pick next day and Gordon had been out under the trees trying the ladders.

He stood for some time at the gate expecting to see Greta and her cousin on their way to the house. Tom was sure to be taken by another way, since he saw nothing of him on the road. At the end of which time he saw young Alway come from the rear of the house and walk in his direction. Gordon decided on another alteration, so he turned to walk away.

"Hold on, Greaves!"

Gordon continued to walk. Again the other called to him, and Gordon at length decided to obey. If this young scamp wished further trouble he could have it. This was the spirit that was in the breast of Tom Alway approached.

"What you running away for?" demanded the farm boy.

"I am not running away," retorted Gordon.

"It looks mighty sight like it to me."

"Your eyes are crooked, then."

Since Tom Alway had a slight cast in one eye, this shot was telling.

"Blame your skin," snorted Tom, whose face was much swollen from the blow delivered by Gordon's fist, "I'll thump you good for that."

"Maybe you will," said Gordon, facing the approaching young tyrant, fully relieved to stand his ground, for what could come.

"I think you're smart, coming here a stranger, trying to run things on my uncle's farm. I want you to understand that I have something to say on these premises."

"I'm not disputing that," sent back Gordon. "Your time seems to run like an eight-day clock."

"I've a notion to knock your head off."

"Come on, I am ready for that sort of thing."

Gordon squared himself to meet a renewal of the battle. Tom simply laughed, as he said:

"I'm not in fighting humor today. I came to tell you that you are discharged from the place. Uncle Silas wants only decent chaps to work for him, so you can get off this place as quick as you can."

CHAPTER XI.

AN INSANE ACT.

Gordon Greaves regarded the speaker with a look that puzzled him.

"Dye hear what I'm telling you?" snarled tipsy Mr. Alway.

"I hear all right," assented Gordon.

"And you'll pick up your duds and start,"

"Well, no, not at your command," declared Gordon. "I am not sure that you are boss of this ranch. I prefer to get my walking papers from the owner."

"Oh, you will, you'll get 'em quick enough. You'd be wise to go at my bidding, though. Greta is very much hurt over your meanness, and when she tells her father, he may take a horsewhip to you."

There was a sting to this suggestion that caused Gordon a pang. He lifted his chin a bit higher, his nerves grew taut, and the scowl with a look equally loving.

"I don't imagine I shall stand for any such performance," said Gordon.

"No, you'll dance a hornpipe, all right enough, when Brangard takes a rawhide gait to playing about your legs," jeered the tall nephew of Farmer Brangard.

"See here, bossy, cut that out."

"I'd cut your eye down to a cent."

The speaker advanced threateningly, his hands clinched. Gordon did not flinch, but stood looking his enemy steadily in the face. When within a few feet, Tom Alway halted—not the only man who liked help—there were others.

With compressed lip and flashing eye Gordon went to the house and secured his small grip. He did this without attracting attention. He had decided to take French leave. For a brief time he had been happy in the thought of earning money that he might go again upon the search for Nada. Since he had blundered into trouble almost the moment he set foot on the Brangard premises, he decided that new pastures new. He had noticed an imposing residence to the north and resolved to try his luck there.

The boy had gone unseen to the gate and was hastening away when he heard some one calling. Looking back he saw a girl running toward him. She came up panting and red from the haste. It was Greta, and she had plainly been crying.

"Where are you going?" she asked in a breathless manner. "I saw you with your satchel in hand and feared you were leaving us."

The sweet face upraised to his was quite wet, and the deep gray eyes were bordered by smashed tears.

"You guessed the truth, Miss Brangard," said Gordon. "I am going. It seems to be a person non-grata in these parts," and he laughed lightly and merrily.

"But you must not go without seeing papa."

"Where is your father?"

"Down on the west lot. It is most supper time; he will be home soon. Now where were you going, anyway? You are a stranger to this country you told me."

"I told the truth, all right," said Gordon. "I don't know a soul in Milwaukee, and the three young chaps who were kind to me in the city, are not going to help me."

"You want work, don't you?"

"Why, of course, hesitatingly.

"How are you going to get either without money? Don't go away, please."

Greta laid her hand and swung his satchel awkwardly. His tanned cheek flushed hot, he caught the look in those pleading gray eyes.

"Why, blame it all," he said, "I thought you were mad at me, Greta. You've told me to go, you know you did. That was because I knocked your cousin down. I was mad myself, I admit that; but he was insulting, you know."

Gordon talked rapidly, his heart swelling. He was not ready to admit any wrong doing on his part, to say the least.

"Did I tell you that? Well, I was excited. I thought you were mad at me, Gordon."

"And he has ordered me to go. It seems to me I can't be of much service where all the people are down on me." The boy came down solid on both feet and turned away once again.

"I didn't mean what I said," broke in the girl, "and see you go, too."

Gordon Greaves hesitated. The repentance of Greta affected him. He would ask nothing better than to remain where she was and become her very good friend and chum. Then there was that old copper cent in his pocket. How far could he go on that? He thought, too, of Nada.

"You will not go," she said, "till you see papa?"

"Well, no, I guess I won't," said Gordon, half-laughing. His resentment toward the

girl was on the wane. He had about forgotten her surly cousin in contemplating pretty Greta.

"Come to the house, then, please; it is most supper time."

"I would rather stay here till we are called, Greta—may I call you that, Miss Branyard?"

"Yes, of course. Everybody calls me Greta, and I shall call you Gordon."

"It has sounded funny to hear you say 'Mr. Greaves,'" and the boy laughed, his resentment quite gone.

"I'm glad you're going to stay," said the girl. "There's lots of things I haven't shown you yet, and you are ever so much nicer than Tom."

"You did not think so a little while ago."

"I was mad then——"

"As a wet hen," chuckled Gordon. "We'll forget that and be friends."

"And you will tell me more about Nada?"

"If you care to hear it, Miss Bran——"

"There you go again," breaking in upon his speech, making a petulant gesture. "I am only Greta."

"I beg ten hundred million pardons," cried contrite and happy Gordon, "it shall be Greta after this every time. I will tell you all about my sister, and you shall tell me what my duty is in the matter. I have heard that father and mother have about given her up, thinking, maybe, she has been carried away by her own folks, and that she was more than half-willing to go. As for me, I will not believe any such thing. I mean to find her first and find out the truth."

"And that is what you ought to do I am sure," said Greta.

"I am glad you think so. A fellow needs a little encouragement once in a while, you know."

"I know if I had a brother, and some one should steal me, I'd think it awful queer if he wouldn't seek to find me and punish the men who stole me."

"Exactly what I mean to do with the rascals who stole Nada."

"Isn't it strange how these men happened along at the time your boat was upset? You tell me that if it hadn't been for these men your sister would have been drowned."

"Yes, that's true."

"They can't be so dreadful bad, then, after all."

"I have thought about it that way; and yet, the more I study the thing the more am I convinced that the motives of the abductors were entirely bad. Doubtless they followed us and lay in wait to steal Nada and perhaps murder me. I have thought that it's possible the storm and upsetting of our canoe saved my life. It interrupted the plans of the stealers, you see."

"What a horrid mess it all is," and Greta shrugged her small shoulders with a low laugh. "I am sure it will all end right, though."

"Why are you sure of that, Greta?"

"Because it wouldn't be right to have it do any other way."

"But, you know, right doesn't always prevail."

"It's going to in this case, though."

"I hope it may."

"How much money must you have to go after the bad men, Gordon?" asked the girl, lifting her gray eyes to his face, a sudden gleam of resolution in their depths.

"The more the better—perhaps a hundred dollars."

"And to think it will take you a good many months to earn that much," sighed Greta. "Then, maybe, when you have the money it will be too late, the bad men will have gone to the other side of the world with Nada. Oh, dear, I should think you would be clear discouraged."

"I have been discouraged sometimes, especially half an hour ago when I thought I'd lost my job here——"

"Say, Gordon," burst out Greta, "It's too awful for you to have to work so long for the money you need. I mean to ask papa to lend you a sum so that you can go at once on the search for poor Nada."

Gordon smiled at the little maid's earnestness. He knew that her proposition was simply from a generous heart, but could amount to nothing.

"You think papa won't let you have the money?" noticing his smile.

"Certainly, I think so."

"You'll see," and Greta turned to go. She bethought herself, however, and facing Gordon, held out her hand. "Come on in to supper. After that I will speak to papa."

Gordon took a single step forward when a hoarse voice came down the walk from the house. Tom Alway was seen approaching, bearing a gun.

"Haven't you gone yet, you sneak!" howled red-faced Tom, rushing down toward the gate, waving a clinched hand, swinging his gun in the other. "I'll show you how we serve tramps in Wisconsin. Now you git!"

The speaker leveled the gun, a double-barreled fowlingpiece, at the breast of Gordon Greaves. The latter turned a bit pale, but stood his ground.

"Git off these premises, you hobo!" growled the would-be master of the place, his eyes fairly blazing.

Greta uttered a frightened scream and sprang at her cousin

She grasped his arm and struggled to wrest the gun from his hands. The next instant there came a flash and stunning report. As Greta half turned about she saw her new friend stagger and fall bleeding to the ground.

CHAPTER XII.

SPURNS HIS ENEMY.

One week later a crumpled and weak bit of humanity opened his eyes and gazed, with a pitiable moan, at the wall in a room off the parlor of Farmer Branyard's dwelling.

The boy put his shaking hand up to his bandaged and aching head. Where was he; what had happened? Gordon Greaves could recall nothing to mind just at this waking moment of consciousness. Some one moved in the room, an anxious woman's face bent over him.

"Gordon, do you know me?" asked a gentle voice, while a soft hand took hold of his weak fingers, pressing them tenderly.

"Yes," faltered the boy faintly, "you are Mrs. Branyard."

"That is right," and a smile touched the face of the woman. "Now you must lie quiet and say no more. You will feel better soon."

With that the woman glided from the room.

Gordon's head ached and his sight was dim. He moved the least bit, thinking to rest himself. A sharp pain darted like a knife-thrust through his head and down his spine.

"I must be awful sick," he groaned, and then he fell asleep.

When he again opened his eyes, a ray of sunlight penetrated the darkened room, and the sound of a moving chair grated on his senses. A ruddy face peered across the threshold, the face of Tom Alway. For a short second the face glowered at him then disappeared.

And then came a flash of memory. He had been shot by Tom Alway and was now just recovering. It seemed a long time ago, yet Gordon knew it could have been only a few hours. Soon Mrs. Branyard came in and fed him some liquid from a bowl with a spoon. After this the boy felt much better.

He was forbidden to talk, however. This regimen went on for several days while stout Gordon Greaves grew rapidly better.

When he was able to sit up, she came to him, the girl who had saved his life. At any rate this is what Gordon believed, since he knew Tom meant to shoot to kill.

"Well, well, you are looking strong and happy this morning," cried Greta with her best smile. "I am so glad you are going to get well."

She sat by the bedside and stroked his curling hair, her soft gray eyes full of a dancing, happy light.

"Was it so bad as that?" asked Gordon, faintly happy under the touch of the girl's small hand.

"Oh, it was worse. We all thought you would die. For a whole week the doctor wouldn't give mamma any hope."

"A whole week?" gasped Gordon.

"Why, yes; you didn't know a thing for a week, Gordon," informed Greta.

"Mercy! how long have I been here?"

"Two weeks, come tomorrow."

Gordon closed his eyes with a moan. So long and he had thought it only a few hours. What a trouble he was making the kind farmer and his wife. The boy thought of this at once. He moved suddenly and sat up.

"I—I mustn't lay here another minute," he protested.

Greta pressed him back to his pillow.

"Lie quiet and be good, sir," she said, with a pleasant laugh. "I am your doctor today, and have my instruction."

Her solicitude was hardly necessary. The boy's head whirled and a deathly faintness seized him; his effort had been too much.

"I—I am very weak," he faltered in a feeble voice.

"Of course you are. If the charge from the shotgun had gone a little lower you would have been killed," said Greta. "Tom has felt awful about it ever since. You see, if you should die he would be a murderer."

The face of the girl was very sober now.

"He meant to kill me."

"He is very repentant, and promises to be good hereafter, but we can never feel kindly toward him again, never in this world. It hurt mamma awful to think that a relative of hers could be so mean. Tom is still here, but he will be sent away as soon as you get well again."

"I don't understand why he hates me so."

"Nobody does. Tom has a quick temper, and he is very sorry now."

Another week passed ere Gordon was able to sit up and talk all he liked. Tom Alway came in one afternoon and stood by his victim's chair. There was a softened look on his ruddy face, and his gaze shifted from floor to ceiling.

"How are you feeling?" finally ventured the sick boy's visitor.

"Comfortable in body at least," said Gordon, looking out of the window. The voice of his enemy was toned to a low cadence.

"You are sure to get along now," ventured Alway. "I hope you won't hate me for what I have done, Gordon Greaves."

The young man shuffled his feet and heaved a deep sigh. The boy in the chair ventured a glance out of the corner of his eye. He could see that the fellow was very much embarrassed, on nettles, in fact.

"Yes, I shall get along," was all the lad's reply. He held no love for the fellow who had attempted to take his life. Although Gordon Greaves was of a forgiving disposition, he could not bring himself to make friends with Tom Alway—not just yet.

"I am going away," said Tom.

"So I have hear[d]."

"I don't know what you think of me, Mr. Greaves?"

"Do you wish to know?"

Gordon shifted in his chair and raised his hollow eyes to the face of his visitor. Across the temple, just in the edge of the curly dark hair, was a livid scar. Tom fumbled nervously with his hands.

"I—I think I know," faltered the burly youth, his red face deepening in color. "You hate me good and strong, and I don't blame you either."

"It is your own fault if I do, Tom Alway."

"I know it is, Gordon."

"Then ask no useless questions."

"Won't you say good-by?"

"No."

A dead silence followed. Gordon's lips were compressed. He was feeding his wrath

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meantime. It was through this youth's vengefulness that he had been nearly killed, had been deprived of work, and had been thrown off the trail of the abductors of poor, unfortunate Nada. Can the reader blame the boy for his resentment?

Slowly steps dragged across the carpet toward the door.

The sick boy gazed resolutely out of the window. He would not, by word or look, favor his enemy. At length the other paused and turned a whitening face full upon the boy in the chair.

"No use, Gordon, I can't go this way," and Tom went back with a long stride, standing once more at the invalid's side. "I want to tell you one thing, old chap, I'm going away, but I shall come back."

"I'd advise you to stay away," warned Gordon coldly.

"I know what you mean, and that is why I shall return," said Tom. "You want to see me punished for what I did to you, and that is why I am coming back. When you are well enough, expect to see me here, ready to face the music."

The speaker held out his hand, but it was unrecognized by Gordon.

"There'll be no music, so you'd better stay away," said Gordon. "As soon as I am able to travel I shall go myself."

"That will not be necessary——"

"Yes it will," turning sharply upon Tom Alway. "Go, get out of my sight, you viper! I wish nothing further to do with you!"

Gordon was white to the lips, and trembling through every fiber of his weak frame. Burly Tom shrank as though scorched with fire. He receded to the door, where he paused long enough to say, in a choky voice:

"Good-by, Gordon. I know how it is, and I am not blaming you at all. I did a mean thing and I am sorry for it. Some time you will find out that I am telling the truth." With that he was gone.

Gordon fell back in his chair, trembling and weak as a child. Two big tears welled from his hollow eyes and rolled down his face.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN UNFORTUNATE MEETING.

Christmas days were near at hand.

The mornings were crisp and the air exhilarating. Gordon Greaves was in sound health once more, yet penniless and without a staff to lean upon.

He had packed his little satchel and was ready to go out once more to seek his fortune and to hunt for his lost Nada. His sojourn at Farmer Branyard's had been anything but a profitable time to our boy hero. Letters had come from home and he had replied to them. Everything was prospering on the Clearwater, yet no word regarding Nada. The parents seemed to have ignored her entirely.

Gordon was not quite clear in his mind as to why this was so.

During his long weeks of illness no word had come to him of Nada, yet the boy did not forget her, nor the mission that had brought him to Wisconsin. He would find her if it took all the best years of his life, nor would he return to the paternal roof till this was accomplished.

No parents could be kinder than Mr. and Mrs. Branyard. Gordon felt that he was trespassing on their good nature after he found his strength.

"I need a chore boy for the winter, Master Gordon," the farmer had said, "and I shall employ you in that respect if you will only stay."

"I thank you very much, Mr. Branyard," Gordon replied, "but I cannot rest easy here. You cannot afford to pay wages such as I feel I must earn in order to pursue my search for Nada."

To this the farmer assented. He liked the boy, but his crops had not been of the best this year, and he had debts to meet; in fact, he had no thought of employing a chore boy only that he might give place to his young friend whom all loved.

"I am sorry that circumstances prevent my paying you a good salary," returned the farmer.

"I have already been too long a drag on your resources," began Gordon.

The farmer stopped him with a quick gesture.

"Not a word, my boy," he cried. "We are only too thankful that our rash and wicked young relative did not kill you outright. I feel that it will take a lifetime of good works to atone for my nephew's mad act."

Gordon had been at work two weeks when his decision to go, came upon him with overmastering force. He accepted the five dollars the farmer paid for the half month, inwardly assuring himself that he would pay it back the moment he came into possession of a considerable sum of money. It was quite necessary to have money in order to find something to do in the city. His thoughts centered on the citw of Chicago. It was there that he had tracked the abductors of Nada, and he instinctively felt that she was being held there by her captors.

On the eve of his departure, Greta came to Gordon and laid a packet in his hand. It was sealed and seemed like a bulky letter.

"For me?" he asked, lifting his surprised gaze to her sparkling face.

"Yes, Gordon, for you, and not to be opened till you reach Chicago."

"Why this mystery?"

"Just because," and Greta laughed.

"A girl's reason, of course. Now I am full of curiosity. Tell me——"

"Not a thing, sir," interrupted the girl. "You must mind what I tell you and not dare take a peep in that envelope till you reach the big city."

"Well, but—see here, Greta, why do you tempt me?" broke out Gordon, pressing her hand in a friendly clasp. "I know you have got up some sort of a surprise for me and I shall do as you ask, for I know you are the best friend I have in Wisconsin."

"You know a lot for a boy," returned the girl laughing. "You know I didn't want you to go, but I can't blame you because of your sister, who may be in need of a brother's help. You must write when you find her and tell me all about how it comes out."

"Yes," said Gordon, "I'll write."

"Be sure and not forget, Gordon."

"There's no danger of that. You have all been so good to me here I could not forget you if I tried, and you may be sure I won't try."

"Do be careful of that envelope," cried the girl, as Gordon tucked it carelessly in his hip pocket. "You will lose it if you are careless, and then——"

"Well, and then?" he transfixed her with his big gray eyes.

"Oh, pshaw, why can't you be serious, Gordon? Be careful of that packet if you wish to find Nada in a hurry."

"All right," and Gordon thrust the precious envelope into a side pocket and secured the latter with a safety pin. "There, how's that, sis?"

"Perfectly lovely, sir."

"Thank you for the packet, Greta, whatever it is."

"Wait till you find out that last. It may be something you won't like."

"I'm not afraid of that."

"I am sorry you have to leave us. You seem like an old friend. I can't realize that I have known you so short a time," said Greta with sparkling eyes.

"It's the same with me," he said. "Next to Nada you are the best girl I know. Where is Tom?"

"He has gone to the lumber woods. Papa thinks the discipline of camp life will be good for him. He has repented many times over his mad act in shooting you. I can't ever like him as I once did. He has such a dreadful temper it makes me shudder every time I think of it."

"I wouldn't think of it, then," said Gordon.

"I try not to. Will you go direct to Chicago?"

"As direct as the cars will take me."

The sound of rolling wheels on the crisp ground attracted them. Gordon went to the window. Mr. Branyard had driven to the door in his buggy.

"Papa is going to the city, and you won't have to walk," explained the girl, noticing an inquiring expression on the face of her companion.

"It's just for me," and he brushed a tear from his eye.

The boy had already bidden Mrs. Branyard good-by. He pressed Greta's hand for the last time and hurried outside. Seated in the farmer's buggy Gordon Greaves was soon whirled away across country, the winter sunshine bathing the landscape with golden glory.

The trip to the city was an uneventful one.

Our boy hero had much to think about. He was making his way to the great city of Chicago with a paltry five-dollar note in his pocket. This would certainly not go far toward setting his feet on the trail of the abductors of his sister. There was a heavy feeling around his heart, a half sob in his throat, as he stood clasping the farmer's hand at the railway station.

"I would advise you to go straight home, my boy," were the words of Farmer Branyard at parting.

Gordon might have returned truthfully that his funds were far from sufficient for that purpose, but he did not.

"No," he said, "I shall soon earn enough in town to help me in my search. I shall, of course, write to father and tell him exactly how it is, since I don't want the home folks worrying about me, you know."

"Quite the proper thing to do," assented the farmer.

Once more the boy from Clearwater stood alone in a strang city, without the remotest idea of what his future movements were to be. He had purchased his ticket, and was about to enter the train when he felt a hand on his shoulder, while a voice said in his ear:

"Where now, Gordon?"

The boy whirled upon the speaker with a glad cry. It was Gus Ellis, the best loved of the three young collegiates he had formerly met in Milwaukee.

"I am off for Chicago," said Gordon as he wrung the hand of his friend.

"Well, I wish I was going that way, too. Hope you had a good time upcountry. Any news from that sister of yours?"

"No," and then Gordon entered into an explanation.

"Quite a serious time you have had," said Ellis. "I wish we were to travel in the same direction. Why are you so anxious about going to Chicago? It seems to me your former experience in that den of wickedness ought to be enough."

"It's not the town, but what I may find there," declared Gordon. "I feel in my bones that Nada is in Chicago."

"In that case I can't blame you for wishing to go there. I wish you were going my way."

"Where is that, Gus?"

"Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. I have an aunt living there whom I have not seen in a good many years. She has lately been bereaved, and she is anxious to see me. If you don't find Nada at Chicago, come up to the Soo, Gordon."

"That I will, Gus."

The two friends separated to go their ways. The ride to Chicago was somewhat tedious, yet Gordon tried to hold his patience for the good of the mission to which he had dedicated himself.

It was not till the grimy brick piles along the river loomed up that Gordon bethought him of the packet Greta had intrusted to him. He drew it carefully from his pocket and broke the seal with unsteady fingers.

A roll of banknotes dropped into his lap!

The boy uttered an ejaculation of surprise. He proceeded to count the money. There was an even hundred dollars, and about them was folded a dainty note. Before he read it, a low cough caused him to look up, and there, smiling curiously, sat no less a person than the infamous Captain Cole Stayne!

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Nothing Green About Him.

Hix—What business is your friend engaged in?

Dix—The grocery business.

Hix—Is he a green grocer?

Dix—No, he sells strictly for cash.

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Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth; or remain childless. Dr. J. H. Dye has devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that all pain at childbirth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, 200 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain; also how to cure sterility. Do not delay but write today.

More Than He Could Stand.

Josiah—Took Bessy out sleigh riding last night and tried to kiss her.

Hiram—And wouldn't she stand for it?

Josiah—Yes, but the blamed old hoss wouldn't. He ran away.

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEN PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. HOOD CO., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (2)

How It Is Better.

She—Some people think that second love is best. What is your opinion?

He—Well, a man's second love is usually worth more money than his first.

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Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and redness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Boyertown, Pa.

A QUIET TIP.

The man who thinks he knows it all
From his lofty perch may get a fall;
But he who is at times in doubt
May find his weakness helps him out.

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhoea, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it free to every suffering sister who writes to me. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut South Bend, Indiana.

Chilly.

Stubb—They say the pretty Boston girl is a good pick; I wonder what kind of a pick she is?

Penn—Ice pick, I suppose.

A BORDER HERO.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

In the troublous times of the early settlement of the West men were often employed to roam the pathless wilderness in the capacity of scouts and spies, in order to detect the approach of large or small parties of Indians, and give timely warning to the scattered settlers, that they might collect in a body to meet and repel their red foes, or find protection inside of their rude forts.

Sitting at our comfortable firesides, in our well-guarded homes, it is difficult to realize the hardships and perils of these devoted men, who were almost continuously traversing hundreds of miles of unbroken wilderness—sometimes alone, sometimes with a companion or two—not knowing at what moment, or in what place the fatal arrow or bullet from an ambushed foe might put a sudden end to their career. They constantly, so to speak, carried their lives in their hands, and when wearied with their long day's march, they rolled themselves in their blankets and lay down to sleep under the branching trees and broad canopy of heaven, in fair weather or foul, on warm nights or cold, with a sleep always of a somewhat uncertainty they would wake again in this world or the other.

In the early days of one of these brave scouts, who had escorted a packet boat from Pittsburg down to the Ohio river to a point past the Big Sandy, where the country was considered safe for the voyageurs, were on their return down the river in a canoe, which had been taken up with them for the purpose.

They were floating down the river in good quiet style, and had been successful in their toil, and this was their time for rest, having now only to paddle their light craft in the current and let it drift. They knew that the forests lining both banks of the river swarmed, and probably did, concealed a merciless foe, and that a fatal shot might be sent to them at any moment; but the chances of this were so remote, comparatively speaking, that they exercised little or no thought to the subject and the fear, which might have troubled an inexperienced person, to these brave fellows unknown.

When they were opposite the mouth of the Scioto, a tributary of the Ohio, one of the three, a bright looking young man of twenty-two, said to his companions:

"I say, boys, just put me ashore here, and I'll go up to a deer lick, right over the hill yonder, and see if I can bring in some game. A little fresh meat now will not be a bad thing to take."

"Don't you think it too risky just now, Duncan?" queried one of his companions.

"You know on our way up we found a canoe sunk in the mud on the other side of the river, which was proof enough that a party of Indians had crossed over there, and it's just as like as not they're back here again and prowling around; it may be watching us from the very point where you want to land."

The young man laughed.

"To hear words of caution from Nat Beasley is like listening to the devil quote Scripture," he said gayly.

"I don't often do it, that's a fact," was the rejoinder, "but somehow I seem to smell Indian in the air to-day."

"Well, I'll risk my part of it if you are not afraid to land me," returned the intrepid Duncan.

"All right, then, and ashore you go, even if it's good-by forever," said the other, as with his long paddle he sent the canoe toward the land.

"Do you want me to go along with you, Duncan?" asked the other one of the three.

"No, Tom, you had better stay in the canoe with Nat," was the answer. "If there is any danger one will be enough to lose."

"Yes, and one too many, my friend. Shall we wait for you here, or drop along down?"

"Oh, the latter, decidedly—for, if the savages are about here, they might surprise you and cut us all off. Besides if they should see you waiting here they would be certain of somebody being ashore,and then they would either attack you or follow me."

The river bank was approached cautiously at a point where there was the least brushwood, and as soon as the young man had landed, the canoe, at his request, was paddled out into the middle of the stream and allowed to float with the current as before, the understanding being that, unless hailed by him sooner, his companions were to land at an open place, from one to two miles below, where there would be little or no danger of a surprise.

After getting ashore, young Duncan assumed all the precaution of an experienced borderer, his keen, quick eyes peering all about him and taking in every tree and bush with the sharp scrutiny of one who allows nothing to escape his rapid vigilance. Then he moved cautiously forward, gliding through the bushes almost as silently as a serpent till he reached the lick.

A lick, as it is called in Western parlance, is a salt spring, where the overflowing waters deposit a thin incrustation of salt upon the surface of the ground. These springs, here and there, dotted the great American wilderness, and at that period, were the resorts of all the wild animals, especially of the herbivorous kind, such as deer and buffalo, which came to satisfy the cravings of nature by licking the saline crust.

As there was seldom any long period when some animal was not present at one of these licks, they became the favorite resorts for hunters; but there was always more or less danger in approaching them, especially in a country infested with Indians, because they were attractions to the red man as well as the white.

As our hero was in sight of the deer lick which he had selected for his present venture, he redoubled his precautions—first, that he might not put his life in the power of some secreted foe; and, secondly, that in case no foe were there, he might not frighten away any chance game.

The lick, however, proved to be clear of both man and beast; and having drawn near enough to make his shot certain, he proceeded to erect a temporary screen, or blind, cutting down some bushes, and so arranging them before him as to present a natural appearance at least to the scrutiny of a deer, and behind which he could remain concealed from the animal.

Here, stretched out upon the ground, and his rifle pointing forward, ready to deal sure death to any living object, the young man waited with the quiet patience of an experienced hunter. Birds flew over him, insects droned about him, but he heeded sighed through the great forest, but no other sights or sounds broke the dull monotony of his lonely watch, till he found himself unconsciously yielding to a drowsiness that would soon have ended in an unconscious sleep.

Rousing himself with a start, he looked sharply around and through his blind, and fancied he saw the branches carefully parting on the other side of the lick.

"Well, something at last, I hope," he said to himself.

But the something he saw was not the something he was waiting to see, for as the bushes parted farther he beheld first, the grim face of one savage, and then that of another savage moving forward, their black eyes seeming to glitter as they surveyed the whole scene before them.

They had evidently come hither for the same object as himself, the hope of surprising some animal at the spring; and when they found there was none, they stepped boldly forward, and stood revealed in the open space around the lick, which the sallow overhanging trees left quite clear and bare of vegetation.

They were two stalwart, formidable-looking warriors, armed with guns, tomahawks and knives, and our hero could divide plainly by have withdrawn and left them in peaceful possession of the place if this could have been done with safety to himself. But his artificial blind was only breast-high, and they were so near him that any attempt to retreat up the hill behind him would have been certain to be seen

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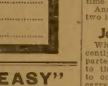

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Dr. J. E. Cannaday, 69 Park Square, Sedalia, Mo.

Reference: Third National Bank, Sedalia, Mo. Could you do a better act than to send this notice to some poor sufferer of Eczema?

Simpson's Straight Whiskey $1.85 One Full Gallon

WE LOSE $1.00

WE want to tell you as an absolute *fact* that every order sent us from this advertisement at these prices will not us an actual cash loss of over *One Dollar each order*. Understand us correctly, should you send us an order from this advertisement at the following prices, it will cost us One Dollar besides your remittance to fill your order. We lose it to you and thank you very much for the opportunity to lose you as a customer. Our order so have you try this Superior Straight Whiskey—and here is why: We know that there is only *one real whiskey* and only *one whiskey that tastes like real whiskey* and that whiskey is a *Straight Aged in Bond Whiskey, pure, unadulterated, undoctored whiskey* with their waters taste and you will pay $1.85 per gallon price. We know full well that once you try a Pure, Straight Aged in Bond Whiskey, such as ours, you will gladly pay your tuture whiskies of us and gladly pay us a small profit above cost.

—that's why we are willing to lose this one dollar

and make these unprecedented offers—that's why we say we thank you for your order even though it does mean a loss of over one dollar. Here is a chance of a lifetime—a truly competition on the following prices for Straight Whiskey. Yest even for Blended goods.

1 FULL GALLON $1.85 Simpson's Straight Whiskey
2 FULL GALLON $3.55 Simpson's Straight Whiskey
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One Full Gallon Simpson's Private Stock, Straight Whiskey, $2.20

Send us either Express or P. O. Money Order, Registered Currency or Kansas City Exchange (no personal checks, we cannot afford to pay exchange) for either one of the above offers which we will at once ship you by Express with the distinct understanding that you have the privilege to sample the whiskey any way you like and should the whiskey not prove satisfactory and the best whiskey bargain you ever heard of, do not hesitate for a moment but just send the whiskey back to us and we will at once send your money back without quibble or argument. We stand squarely behind this whiskey to the fullest extent; we offer it with the absolute guarantee that it will satisfy any whiskey user. We have come to the full realization that real whiskey means straight pure, wholesome Aged in Bond Whiskey. We have also found in our years of dealing with thousands of customers that *it pays us even to Lose Money on the first order.*

P. S.—He probably would not lose money on such watery stuff as some mail order whiskey fakers send out who never had REAL Whiskey in their house.

JOHN SIMPSON CO., Dept. 57 Kansas City, Mo.

He was making his escape, and they were hoping to be in time to aid him.

He shouted to them, and they hastened to the shore, where your young hero met them, all bloody and out of breath, and really dying, as he believed.

"Thank God," he said, as he sank exhausted into the arms of his companions, "that I have escaped the savages to die with you."

They were alarmed at his condition, and as soon as they had got safely out into the middle of the stream they examined his wound.

To their great joy and his, it was found that the ball, instead of passing through him, as he had supposed, had struck his powder horn, and driven some of the splinters into his flesh, which had caused the blood to flow freely, but in reality had only inflicted a trifling wound, from which he speedily recovered.

It may increase the interest of the reader to know that the foregoing narration is no fiction, but only one of many thrilling adventures in the early life of Dunbar McArthur, who subsequently became a state senator, a member of Congress, a general in the army, fighting bravely through the war of 1812, and in 1820 was elected Governor of Ohio, thus becoming the ruler over a great and populous state, whose once unbroken wilderness he had traversed in his youth as a daring Indian scout and spy.

Preaching With Practice.

At a certain well-known medical college not a thousand miles from New York, there is a staff lecturer who is famous for the reality of a practicing physician possessing the ability to impart knowledge. The gentleman in question, be it added, is an expert in the treatment of all diseases as he is insistant upon it; wherefore he is affectionately known as "Cap-Nasa."

Just before the recent graduations, he was for the hundreth time enlarging on the pot-luck which awaits the young physicians' discourses something like this:

"And now, my young gentlemen, you young gentlemen, the prime necessity of training yourselves to that invaluable habit of sleeping at any time, anywhere, whenever an unexpected fifteen minutes offers itself. Remember your often exhausted energies. It may be in a car, with a ride and time to spare, or in the office, anney you. It may be in your office, between—at first, you know, there may be intervals. It may come in the office, any time; but seize the opportunity whenever you feel sleep coming on, whether it be what is going on around you—when you feel your time is being unjustifiably employed.

And then from the hindmost bench came two loud, unmistakable snores!

Joke Proves a Boomerang.

When a certain young Pittsburger recently took unto himself a wife and departed for a two weeks' bridal tour, it fell to the lot of the fellow-workmen left to occupy the happy benedict's desk and carry on his work. Now, during the period the "sub," who is rather a difficult lecturer, conceived the idea of decorating the bridegroom's desk in a manner calculated to make that young man sit up and take notice.

Accordingly, on the evening previous to the groom's scheduled return, the mischievous friend proceeded to embellish the desk in a manner that was certainly to be beheld. Festoons of ribbon, showers of rice, garlands of old shoes, and a copious litter of paper boxes and wrappings transformed the desk into a veritable bridal bower.

The following morning the bath was on hand bright and early to enjoy the embarrassment of the bridegroom. He came a hitch. It consisted of a telegram conveying the news that Mr. Benedict had been delayed a day and Mr. Bach would be obliged to continue in his place.

Then the decorator dropped to the real humor of the situation and the fun began. With his left hand resting on the encarnined blues of a boiled lobster, Mr. Bach took his place amid the bridal finery and sat throughout the day, while the curious strangers paused to glance and giggle and frolicks rushed in to bush and congratulate.

When Mr. Benedict returned next day he found his desk quite free from frills or frippery. For Mr. Bach had done away with the previous evening. He was taking no chances of a second day's delay.

The Golden Spider.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

"Slain in my service!"

"In this house?"

"No, sir. That is all," and the coverlet was thrown back over the silent one. "We'll go down, now. You did me a service once, you remember. I am not long for this world. I shall soon follow Gunner Sludge. I shall soon be where all the secrets of life stand revealed. I say that you know something from what you have just said to me. I have been blackmailed. You can't fully realize how a man would guard a secret which has been a part of his life for years. For God's sake, young sir, that you may never have one like mine. Now, sir, if I only knew if my child is alive I'd defy the world and die!" and old Barlow sank into a chair and turned toward Cecil a face which drew from his heart all the pity it had ever known.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories like that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Modern Bluebeard's Chamber.

"Now—I think," the hero of our genial host, who had promised us a story as we sat around the fire after supper, "that the ladies had better retire, for I am sure this story will make them rather nervous."

"Nonsense!" cried the ladies in chorus.

"You can't make us nervous!"

"Well, then, don't worrits if you'll dream about it. Take my advice, now, and don't stand and listen in."

"Oh, but we love horrors!" they cried. "You can't frighten us. Do begin!"

"Very well, then," said the host gentleman, "don't say I didn't warn you. Some years ago I knew a young girl who came to live with me—close to my own native village, in fact—went to Manchester, England, as a domestic servant. She was very pretty looking, but quite simple and inexperienced. Poor girl, I fear her pluck was greater than her well. There were only her master and mistress in the family. Now the master had not much liberty and was kept below stairs, and he was mostly treated, and she sent large sums of money to her folks at home every month.

"After a time, however, she began to think there was something queer about her place. She noticed that, though the several occasions nicely dressed ladies came to see her master and mistress, she never saw them go away again, and her suspicions were strengthened when she found that there was a certain room opened to which was always carefully locked whenever her master and mistress went out.

"One day, when they had both accepted an invitation to go to dinner with a neighbor, the girl crept upstairs, and found that by some overnight the key had been left in the door. It was not long before she could bring herself to open the door and look in. Instantly she did, she turned about with a screech of terror, and, pulling the door to after her, ran down to the basement and covered her head with her apron.

"But she could not blot out the awful sight, for in the dreadful room she had precipitated heads of women, the hair still clinging to some, lying here and there strewn about the floor. Suddenly she heard her mistress' return, her jury upstairs, evidently coming back for the incriminating key, which she had forgotten.

"Creeping into the passage the maid heard her lock the awful door, come downstairs, and once more leave the house for a visit her friends. No sooner had she gone than the pale and trembling girl tied her belongings into a bundle and hurried out into the street, where she wandered about till she met a policeman, to whom she told her tale. She repeated it at the station to the captain, and with a party of police where the wretched couple were having tea with their friends. The house was surrounded while the captain and two officers accompanied the girl back to her place. She led them up to the locked door. The door it open, and found they had broken into a ladies' dressmaking establishment, where customers went in at one door and out at another."

Wide as the Poles.

Mrs. Highup—What is the science of your treatment, Doctor Oldschool?

Doctor Newschool (homoeopathist)—It is very simple. We take the poison which produces a disease, weaken it by successive reductions, and administer it in small doses. Like cures like.

Mrs. Highup (some days later)—What is this new fangled treatment you are using, Doctor Oldschool?

Doctor Oldschool—It is very simple. We take the poison which produces a disease, weaken it by successive reductions, and administer it in small doses, as a mild form of inoculation, you know.

Mrs. Highup (an hour later)—What is all that rumpus out in the street?

Servant—Doctor Oldschool and Doctor Newschool fighting.

Perfectly Frank.

Father—Ha! How is it I catch you making love to my daughter?

Suitor—Well—er—I believe, sir, it is because I didn't hear you coming.

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I have in my possession a prescription for nervousness, debility, lack of vigor, weakness and impoverished, failing memory and lame back, brought on by excesses, nervous trivial drains, or the follies of youth, that has cured so many worn and nervous men right in their own homes without any additional help or medicine—that I think every man who wishes to be a strong, healthy, nerve and vitality, quickly and quietly, should have a copy. So I have determined to send a copy of the prescription free of charge, in a plain, ordinary sealed envelope to any man who will write me for it.

This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood and vigor failure ever put together.

I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the most invigorating restorative, upbuilding, BODY-BUILDING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quickly and quietly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. R. Sanden, 1031 Sanden Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $5.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

PICKLED PEPPERS

The Waiter Was Too Smart.

"I ate my breakfast this morning in a Market street restaurant," said a down-town business man, "and something occurred that particularly appealed to my sense of humor. A man and a woman were seated opposite me, and the waitress placed a large plate of biscuits before the two. 'I prefer bread,' said the woman. In a jiffy the biscuits were whisked away and replaced with the staff of life. I noticed a wistful sort of expression on the man's face as the biscuits disappeared, but he made no remark. 'I guess she's the boss of that ranch,' I thought, and then the woman turned and said: 'I believe the girl thinks we are together.' As the waitress came back to give the couple a check she was just about to punch the amount of two meals on one which she loaded up suddenly and asked if they were together. In one breath they said 'No.' Well, you should have seen that girl's face. She blushed furiously and then capped the climax by saying: 'O, you eat there so quiet like, not speakin'. I thought you were married.'"

All but Dinny.

She was an old and obviously earnest Irish woman, and she had traveled all the way to Plymouth to see off her son Dinny on a drill with the First regiment, now stationed at Todds Point.

Up and down, up and down, Dinny was being drilled within an inch of his life by the commander of the "awkward squad."

Dinny did not see his old mother, and she saw no one but Dinny. There she stood with her sweet, old blue eyes suffused with tears and such a longing, mother-love look in them that she attracted the gaze of the crowd. Turning for one instant to those nearest her, she quipingly said:

"Aw, wisha, look at 'im—ivery mother's son of thim out of step but me bye Dinny!"

Fragile.

Molly—Did you carry out any of those good resolutions you made New Year's?

Cholly—Yes; but I tried to carry out too many at once, fell down and broke them all.

RURAL JOY RIDES.

Joy riding! Huh! Those city chaps are
Doing all that we while
Of whizzing past in motor cars with city
gals in style.
They let their siren whistles shriek until
they almost stun
And flashing by like comet tails they think
is lots of fun;
But, though the big machines can speed
and cost a princely price,
They never give the pleasure or to me seem
quite so nice
As joy rides the farm boys have along with
Dolly or Dine
Down the old road by moonlight in a horse
sleigh built for two.

Hitting Back.

Mrs. Stubb—John, what were you conversing with the salesman about?

Mr. Stubb—Why, Maria, I was trying to coax him to smoke those cigars you gave me for a Christmas present.

Mrs. Stubb—Call him back, John.

Mr. Stubb—Ah, you would like to see him take the cigars?

Mrs. Stubb—No, I want him to take some perfume to his wife—you know, dear, the perfume you selected for my Christmas gift.

Heavy-Weight.

Father—Yes; I was quite an athlete when I was young. I was always in demand when feats of strength were to be performed.

Kid—Did they want to try to lift you?

A Poser.

Bobby—What was the hardest question the teacher asked you today?

Johnny—She asked me whether I'd rather be licked with a ruler or a strap.

Modern Methods.

As I opened the door I saw a man with a burglar's mask kneeling before the safe.

The next moment he had turned and shoved a revolver into my face.

"Throw up your hands!" he said.

I did so.

"You understand," he remarked pleasantly, "that I can, under the present circumstances, loot the premises at my pleasure?"

I confessed that he could.

"You realize that you are at my mercy?" he asked.

"I do," I replied.

"You acknowledge that I can blow you to kingdom come if I like?" he persisted.

"Certainly," I admitted.

"Well, then," he said, "you will be interested to know that I got in without difficulty through your parlor window. Had it been equipped with Smith's patent safety burglar alarm and preventer, this could not have happened. Installed, complete with batteries, for $15.75. Allow me to hand you a circular. Good night, sir."

Therewith, pocketing his revolver, he withdrew.

A Joker.

A seedy-looking man entered a store in Trenton the other day and asked for assistance, backing up the request with a long tale of sickness and lack of employment.

With a wink at his clerk, the merchant pointed to a friend who happened to be in the place, and replied:

"Ask that gentleman. He is the proprietor. I am only a clerk."

The friend received the beggar's request in a sympathetic manner, and turning to the merchant, remarked:

"This seems to be a worthy case, Mr. Jones. Give him a dollar from the cash register," and walked out of the store.

It was in vain that the merchant protested that it had been a joke. So insistent did the seedy one become that "de boss's" directions should be carried out that it was finally necessary to do so in order to be rid of him.

Duffy—How do you like that cigar, old man?

Bluffy—Fine. Who gave it to you?

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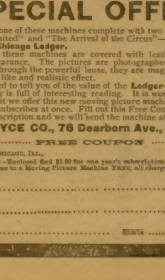

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

HAND IN HAND.

Hand in hand with angels,
Through the world we go;
Brighter eyes are on us,
Than we blind ones know;
Tenderer voices cheer us,
Than we deaf will own;
Never, walking heavenward,
Can we walk alone.

Hand in hand with angels,
Walking every day;
How the chain may lengthen,
None of us can say;
But we know it reaches
From earth's lowliest one,
To the shining seraph
Throned beyond the sun.

Hand in hand with angels!
Blessed so to be;
Helped and the helpers,
Giving light, they see.
He who aids another
Strengthens more than one;
Sinking earth he grapples
To the Great White Throne.

Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Harry, the small son of a young widow, was tired of frocks. One evening when a gentleman called to see his mother he said: "Mamma, will Mr. Green buy me a pair of pants if I let him marry you?"

"What are you laughing at, dear?" asked a fond mother of a little 4-year-old miss who seemed to be greatly amused.

"Oh, at something funny that happened," was the reply. "But it is going to tell you, because it isn't funny enough for both of us to laugh at."

Elmer—Mamma, didn't you say we should always try to make other people happy?

Mamma—Yes, dear.

Elmer—Well, I know a little boy that I could make very happy if I had five cents to buy candy with.

Mamma—Who is the little boy?

Elmer—Why, it's me.

Papa—Mamma says you were a good boy today, so here's a penny.

Little Fred—Make it two, papa, an' I'll be gooder tomorrow.

Little Lois met an old gentleman who informed her that he was 80 years old.

"Well," said Lois, "when people get that old I suppose living becomes a habit."

"Elmer," said a mother to her strenuous little son, "I'm awfully tired of the noise you make."

"And I'm getting awfully tired of the noise you make in trying to stop the noise I make, mamma," rejoined the boy.

Dr. Wiley says, "Watch the hens." The Blade says watch your gardens.

THE CHARCOAL BURNER

Once upon a time there was a good king of France named Louis, who had six daughters and no sons. This was a great grief to the king, for while he loved his handsome daughters, he knew that his subjects would never consent to have a queen rule over them when he was dead.

So, you see, when at last his queen did present the king with a fine baby boy, the king was very happy, and he had him named Philip Dieu-donne, or God-given, to show how thankful he was to have a son. Philip, who was a very clever boy, grew up, delighting his father's heart in all that he did, and when he was only 12 years old his father decided to have him crowned and married while he was yet living. So he sent to Hainault to arrange for the marriage of Philip and the beautiful Isabelle, and he made plans with his ministers for the boy's coronation.

Now, just before the day set for the great event the king went on a hunting party with his son. Barely had the hunting party entered the forest when a wild boar darted across the path of one of the huntsmen. Quick as a flash they let the hounds loose, and then the horses and dogs rushed through the forest in all directions after the boar. Philip followed with all eagerness in the direction which he thought the beast had taken. But after riding at a great speed for a little while, his horse slackened his pace. This gave Philip the chance to look about him. Then, seeing that he was separated from the horsemen, he rode slowly for a while, looking anxiously about in the dark caves.

Without being really frightened, he turned his horse about and rode back in the direction from which he had come. Still he found no one and saw nothing but the dark trees and heard only the sound of his horse's hoofs in the silent woods.

So he put his hand to his mouth and hallooed as loud as he could. He paused, listening for the answer that he expected. But he heard nothing. So he kept this up for a while, and then, becoming really alarmed, he began to ride about, back and forth in the forest, until he had quite lost his way. And then, when some night was seeming in and the shadows of the trees became long and the young prince was cold and hungry as daylight, cheered by the sound of the huntsmen and the barking of hungry and galloping of horses, Philip had thought to forget a little bit of place, but now alone, it seemed vast and dreary, and the prince's brave heart began to beat fast as he rode aimlessly about.

At last, when it had been quite dark for several hours, and the prince could scarce see his hand before his face, he saw, or thought he saw, for he wasn't quite sure at first, a light in the distance. So he urged his horse onward, and together they went as fast as they could in the direction of the light.

After a few minutes Philip discovered it to be the fire of a charcoal kiln, and riding up he found a man sitting near the fire with a great bellows. The man was very large and rough, with a face that was quite black from the charcoal. Besides that, he had a great ax at his side, which rather frightened the young prince.

Philip was at a loss what to say, but with a trembling voice he began:

"Excuse me, but I am the son of the king. I am Philip, and I have lost my way."

But as soon as he had said these words he realized that he ought not to have told who he was, for, as he was soon assured, for the man helped him gently from his horse and offered him to the little prince, who was so hungry that he thought it the best meal he had ever eaten. Then, while the prince was eating, the collier did what he could for the worn-out horse, taking off his saddle and giving him meal and water. And after he had finished his supper, the little prince curled up before the fire of the charcoal kiln and went to sleep, dreaming, no doubt, of the beautiful Isabelle of Hainault, whom he was soon to marry.

Now, while all this was going on you can imagine how anxious the king had become. After he and his huntsmen had discovered that the prince had ridden away from them, they forgot all about the wild boar, and searched here and there in every direction for the boy. But the prince had ridden far away, indeed, and their efforts were in vain. Finally, as night set in, some of the horsemen went back to the castle to tell the sorrowful news to the queen and to tell everyone what had befallen the prince. Then, as it grew toward midnight, the king consented to being taken back to the castle, for he was in very poor health, and the thought of his anxiety had made him unable to help in the search.

But as soon as the good king had reached the castle he hurried to the chapel, and there, before the altar, he implored his evil friend, Thomas à Becket, who had died just a few years before, to pray with him for the safe recovery of the little prince.

So the night was spent. The king praying before the dimly lighted altar, the horsemen riding with great anxiety through the great forest, and the little prince safe in the care of the poor charcoal burner.

Toward daybreak one of the riders returned and, tip-toeing up to the king, whispered to him what there was to be seen of the prince.

"Have faith," said the old king, "for, by St. Thomas a Becket and the holy angels, he shall soon be found."

At that that very moment a courtier came running into the chapel.

"He is safe!" he cried. "The prince is found!"

And before the king had the chapel he uttered a prayer of thanksgiving.

The collier, who loved a pew grimy and laughter of children, had risen in his bed and looked the night before, when the prince had first come in, but he had, COMO seen on the prince's horse, leading the boy in his arms, to the castle. So, early after his night of fatigue and anxiety to with his charge, leaving the prince and his horse safely in some courtiers at the castle, the poor man would have walked home, but the prince would not let him detained and given a large sum of gold and a fine horse, being also invited to ride thanking him personally for the good deed he had done.

For several days the prince was very ill and the coronation had to be postponed, but after a few days he was as well as ever and lived to marry the fair Isabelle who had been chosen for him. And wisest kings that France ever had, and to be called Philip Augustus.

And the prince was very grateful for the recovery of his beloved son that he went to the very spot where the tomb of his friend, Thomas a Becket, at Canterbury, and presented him beautiful gifts for the poor and for the cathedral, and, above all, a magnificent ring, set with jewels one of the treasures of Canterbury.

Little Robert received a wagon on his birthday morning and within an hour he had broken a wheel. After trying in vain to repair the damage he called to his father, who soon mended it. "There," he said, "you are smarter than you look."

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